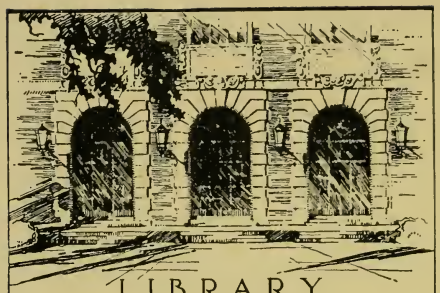

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THE MARTYR OF GLENCREE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

THE MARTYR OF GLENCREE.

A ROMANCE TOO TRUE.

By ROBERT SOMERS.

"Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure, to his loved land,
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim—
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
Till persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew—
No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this."

COWPER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,

CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1878.

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THE MARTYR OF GLENCREE.

CHAPTER I.

Woe all! a day of wrath, when true Love's course,
Not only rough, is headlong flung, and souls
Of man and woman through the furnace pass—
Religion's light, but weak at best, is swept
From its own lamps—and all the Charity
Of life is scorch'd by the sirocco blast
Of blind imperious Tyranny.

Anon.

GLENVERNOCH is a glen within a greater in the hill country, where the ancient province of Galloway borders on Ayrshire, in the south-western corner of Scotland. The scene of our story is thus almost as involved and romantic as the story itself.

In the reign of Charles II. Glenvernoch

gave its name to a farm and farm-house, which became famous, even tragical, in the annals of that period.

The farm and farm-house of same name are still extant; but they have not the same form as they had at the period in question. The farm-house of Glenvernoch was then a long building of one story, but of high roof, thatched with straw, moss-grown; and direct in front of it was a row of buildings lower and still longer than the farm-house proper, in which there was a barn at one end, extending backward along the stack-yard; a stable and byre at the other, also elongated to the back; and between these a wool and general store room, and rooms for dyeing, spinning, weaving, and brewing, in the homely fashion of the time. There was thus a kind of street in Glenvernoch, and the place might properly enough, as in the common dialect,

be called a "town." It embraced and represented a great amount of useful industry; and as Glenvernoch himself said, "the out-bigging was as gude as a fortification, and kept the east wun' oot o' the chaumrie."

There were no roads properly speaking to Glenvernoch, or round or about it, but there were bridle-tracks and ways along which carts or hurdles sufficiently oxened or horsed might draw a moderate load with some difficulty. The tracks and ways followed the natural facilities of the country, and were guided in the vicinity of Glenvernoch chiefly by the course of a river, indicating a common level which was so marked a mile or two from Glenvernoch that the river there broadened into a lake, surrounded by much exuberance of forest.

It was a fair enough scene of nature to

look upon. This valley of the Cree, with its lake-like expanse of water and its fringes of wood, had sometimes a look of paradise from the inner glen of Vernoch with its bleaker background. Following the stream upward the country became wilder and more inaccessible, though not without elements both of grandeur and beauty. The hills were bold and lofty, as well as varied in outline, bare and bleak or white with snow in winter, but green almost to their tops in early summer, with many a sheltered valley between their shoulders unseen and unimagined by the traveller, till, ascending some height or emerging from a narrow ravine, a scene of solitary beauty suddenly gleamed on his sight, with its lake or tarn smooth and shiny as a mirror if the day were warm, or ruffled by the winds and darkened by the clouds at other periods. The lower ground

was still in some parts largely covered by natural forest, traces of which crept along the sides of the hills. In one place the wood was more dense than in any other. It was called "The Caldons," probably because—without pretending to any learned etymology—it had been recognized for many ages as a genuine remain of "the Caledonian forest," which had proved so formidable an obstacle to the Roman legions. Here were many heavy pines, oaks, and birches—not dense as a North Carolina forest, nor so stately, but rather straggling, with many glades and openings in the denser parts. Along the banks of the streams the silver birch was predominant, its white glistening bark and feathery leaves imparting much grace to an otherwise rugged country, where the inhabitants were thinly scattered, and the herds of black cattle and flocks of smeared sheep

were hid from view in the unevenness of the landscape.

The farmer of Glenvernoch, Gilbert Wilson, and his family were about to partake of breakfast one morning in the mid-autumn of 1684. The breakfast-room was probably more tidy than usual, but it was particularly clean and neat on this occasion. The eldest daughter Margaret, and her young sister, had seen the grate brightened, and the hearthstone washed and made white by the kitchen-woman, while they swept the apartment, dusted the chairs and other furniture, and spread a black oak table with a cloth not much finer than huckaback, but spotlessly clean; while the bare part of the table was covered with rush-woven mats for the platters and other vessels of the morning viands. They had also placed a bunch of thyme with sprays of bright ivy leaf on the mantelpiece, and

one of the windows partly open looked out on a meadow, from the natural clover and herbage of which a pleasant fragrance came on the sharp autumnal air. This was the kitchen of Glenvernoch, but it was the upper part of it, and in the other, which on a lower floor was a cooking-place and scullery, a large fire of peat and logs burned on the hearthstone, and a plainer table was spread with wooden dishes of porridge and milk, a cheese, and abundance of oatmeal cake.

Glenvernoch had seen most of his workers off, after a much earlier breakfast, some to the meadows, some to the moss, and his only son Thomas, next to Margaret in age, had gone with a shepherd or two on some duty among the flocks. But it was the custom to assemble all the serving-people who happened to be about "the toon" to breakfast at the same hour with

the family, in order, among other reasons, that "the morning duty" might be performed.

"Signs o' bad weather doon the country this mornin'," said Glenvernoch to his wife, who had gone out to wave him in.

"What say ye, Glen, and the sun shining sae brichtly?" remarked the good-wife.

"It may be," replied the farmer, with a hardness of tone that had become not unusual to him of late—"it may be, but the foogities hae been scudding through the mosses sin' dawn, like skarts afore a storm."

"Whae are they, gudeman? Whae?" inquired his anxious but kind-hearted wife.

"Hoo am I to ken whae they be, gudewife?" continued the farmer. "I only spak' a word in the by-ganging an 'oor or twa sin' to Mr. Kennedy o' Barnkirk, the

minister, ye ken, wha's settled in the Gospel noo in Ulster. He cam' ow'r in secret to see his wife and family; and tho' she's conformed and on gude terms wi' the curate, he has mickle fear they'll no' be unco safe. As for himsel', puir man, he maun tak' leg-bail, an' be thankfu' gif it dinna fail him."

"Whis-h-t!" said Mrs. Wilson; "say naething aboot it, Glen, when we gang in. Dinna frichten the weans."

When the family sat down to the meal, Mrs. Wilson, *née* Gordon, occupied a seat on one side of the fireplace; and on the other side, in a chair usually occupied by the farmer himself, sat a young woman of superior rank, of whom Glenvernoch and his wife always spoke when alone as "Lady Martha." But it appeared to be the rule of the family not to distinguish her save as a companion whom Margaret

had met during a short while she had been at school in Wigtown.

She was Martha Dunbar, daughter of Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon, and sister of the David Dunbar, younger of Baldoon, whose marriage to the first Viscount Stair's daughter Janet, fifteen years before, was suddenly followed by a tragedy which had been an inconsolable grief to both families. The young lady was dressed in a dark-brownish wrapper of country-made stuff. Her hair was plainly parted in front, but in its profusion was gathered up behind, and was held there by a comb which sunk out of sight in the silky folds. A little white collar or ruff round her neck was bound by a blue silk tie which lay in a bow on her bosom. Her wrapper was gathered tightly round her waist by a broad ribbon of the same colour. She was a picture of health and comeliness. Her blue eyes

sparkled with deep senses of pleasure. Her cheeks were rosy, and her regular features were rounded into loveliness by a pretty mouth and chin. The accents of her voice in conversation were tenderly musical. Her laugh was not only hearty and merry, but it was the laugh of music also. There were notes of harmony, a little peal of bells, in it. Here is a young woman, one would have said, born to take and give pleasure in the world, and to be a good manager in domestic affairs. Yet over all this beauty there hung this morning a heavy shade of anxiety, and the joyous blue eyes seemed as if they would now and again melt into tears.

Between Martha Dunbar and Margaret Wilson there was a fond attachment. But they were very different in appearance. Margaret, now in her seventeenth year, was eight or nine years younger than

Martha, and the tall, slim figure of the farmer's daughter and her pale complexion, to which latter no high colour came, save when warmed by indignation at some foul wrong, were as unlike as possible to the full-budded Rose of Baldoon. Yet Margaret was by no means unbeautiful. Her eyes, of light hazel, were full-orbed, and would have been deemed prominent but for well-developed eyebrows and long eyelashes; a straight and well-chiselled nose, slightly reined, as it were, at the point, where there was a distinct indentation as of nostrils that in some moods might breathe fire and defiance to all the powers of darkness; with a certain firmness of the lips and strength of the lower part of the face, indicating firmness of character and strength of will. Yet Margaret, when unmoved by passion, had a most mild and winning aspect. Her eyes, as they looked

to one with softest sympathy, and drooped and looked again with a lustrous quiver as of love and modesty combined, imparted a more than physical beauty to her countenance. The dress and manner of this maiden were all of the same simple pattern—"when unadorned, adorned the most." Her loud word was never heard. She moved like one of the Graces, gently but powerfully, among all the roughnesses of a country farm, and in a rude and violent time.

The breakfast over, the people in the lower part of the kitchen came with stools in their hands, and sat down in the empty spaces round the black oak table, while Glenvernoch was closing the front door. On resuming his seat he opened the Bible, and after what was more an ejaculation than a prayer that the Holy Spirit might be pleased to shed light on His own Word,

read a chapter. On closing the Book, he looked over to Margaret, who rose and kneeled at her chair—a movement that was followed by all the others. The daughter offered a brief prayer, in which, in tremulous tones, she glorified God, and after thanking the Most High for the family blessings of peace, protection, and sustenance, and imploring that He would guard their hearts from temptation and their lives from offence, concluded with a petition that He would cover with His Almighty power the faithful in the land, and that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, would come as of old and reign as undisputed Head and King of His Church. Glenvernoch had in former years performed this part of the family exercise by repeating the Lord's Prayer or reading a prayer from John Knox's Liturgy. But since the advent of curates, and formal

readings of prayers and sermons in the parish churches of Scotland under the Restoration of the Monarchy, the antipathy of the Presbyterians to prescribed prayers, as well as their preference for more direct utterances from the heart, had much increased; and Glenvernoch, while adhering to his liturgy, sometimes laid on his daughter a duty for which he felt she was much better fitted than himself. A psalm was then sung, in the course of which a rap was heard at the front door. Glenvernoch gave another verse, and then closing the psalm, passed out from the kitchen, the men-servants rising and following him.

On the farmer returning to the family dais, he said, "It's only the callan'"—the callant being the sentry who at this troubled period was stationed on an advanced post to watch the tracks, and give timely warning of any party seen to

be approaching—"only the callan'" repeated Glenvernoch. "He says there are twa mounted drovers and a haveral on a bit shelty, riding up the heugh unco canty-like. Want to see some nowt, I daresay. But I dinna much like thae roving blades. I like best to hear what the open market is saying afore I deal with ony ane. And thae times are sae very kittle."

"Hoot, toot! Glen, it's naething ava," said the good-wife. "Hoo aften hae we had sic chapmen?"

"Weel, that may be," said Glenvernoch, "but ye'se better na shaw yersels," casting an anxious look towards Martha, which that young lady seemed to understand, for, throwing her arm round Margaret, the two retired to an upper chamber, where they could neither see nor be seen, till it might happen to please themselves.

"I am gaing doon to meet them at the slap," said Glenvernoch to his wife. "If they offer fairly, and a gude bargain may be struck, wi' money doon, I may bring them in. But gifna they be vera freen'ly indeed, nae a foot will they pass ow'r my door-step."

The mistress of Glenvernoch, willing to take the most favourable view of affairs, proceeded to put her little parlour in order, and looked out some of her best home-brewed, in case there should be a transaction which her goodman might consider "freen'ly."

CHAPTER II.

No zealous contentions should ever perplex us,
No politic jars should divide us or vex us;
No Presbyter Jack should reform us or ride us,
The stars and our whimsical noddles should guide us.
Ned Ward.

The travellers, approaching Glenvernoch, had left the county town that morning at dawn in as high spirits as men could do, who had a late sederunt the night before, and were conscious of an important mission on the day following. So eager were they overnight that the "haveral" by whom they were attended—a brisk country lad in his teens, who had already been at many fairs and markets, and had served both

buyers and sellers in turn—was roused out of a hay-loft, in which he was soundly sleeping, ordered to saddle the horses forthwith, and to wake up his masters at the first streak of day from what they could only themselves expect to be a few uncertain half-hours of rest. An administrative vigour was striking out from the usually sleepy county town at this juncture with almost electric force. Everything was to be done or ridden over in a trice; and the "haveral," on his part, was fully equal to the occasion, having had the happiness of finding that his good masters had not gone to bed at all, but were carousing at dawn where they had been carousing the night before.

The riders were thus soon mounted, and they made the best of their way towards Glenvernoch and the hill country. But it was a considerable way,—perhaps ten or

twelve miles as the crow could fly, but much more on the tracks then passable, with their tendency to avoid any marshy places, and rise to higher levels and harder ground.

Yet soon after sunrise the two riders found themselves in the old town of Penninghame, with its old church and churchyard, and a few scattered houses, one of which was an hostelry where both men and horses could be refreshed. It was all but the highest point on a wide heath, with a rough but sloping vale on one side, and somewhat higher ridges on the other. But from the "clachan," as it was called, almost the precise locality of Glenvernoch could be seen with the naked eye. Yet the riders could not pass without some little dealing with "Lucky Heron." An inn is always good for man or beast, and the rising sun has an enlivening effect on the

human frame, however wearied the previous day or night may have been.

It was with much exhilaration, therefore, these emissaries of the county town resumed their journey towards Glenvernoch and the hill country, and avoiding less sequestered paths, pressed onward through a morass towards their point of destination. On riding round the walls of the old square tower of Castle-Stewart, the glee of our worthies was sensibly increased. A couple of dragoons were posted at the principal gate; and in the courtyard, enclosed by a strong but not very lofty wall, several more horses were hitched, and were being groomed amid jests and snatches of song, and the morning drill of a small party of wild-looking foot soldiers—a relic of the Highland host which had spread alarm through the district a few years before—who rested and shouldered arms to words

of command in a language which neither of our travellers understood. It was known to them, however, that the Baron of Castle-Stewart, in no favour either with the local or higher authorities, had left the tower a day or two before in high dudgeon at this military occupation—leaving only an old seneschal and a few servants as his representatives. The dragoons and the foot soldiers had the place much to themselves, and they meant to have a fat and merry time of it, if their officers could only keep them from quarrelling over the spoil.

The travellers showed their passes, and after exchanging a few smirks with the dragoons on guard rode on.

And now, since the sun is fully up, let us take a glance at these merry men.

The younger and stronger of the two may be nearly thirty years of age. He rides his Galloway with ease, and with the air almost

of a cavalier. He has large overalls of thick woollen stuff over his limbs, strapped round his waist, and enclosing even the skirts of his frieze doublet. He wears a leather belt, and but for a plaid in which he has wrapped the upper part of his person with much neatness, the ends of it falling gracefully round each hip, it would be observed that in the belt he has two pistols—a mark of high privilege at the time for any one moving in public, but which he has no desire to disclose save when absolutely needful. On his head there is a broad bonnet, without any droop in it, firm and starched-like in its crown and bound with strong ribbon round the lower rim, which enables him to wear it sometimes almost wholly on one side of his head. Under this bonnet there is a broad and beaming, but devil-may-care kind of face. His companion may be nearer forty

than thirty years of age, but looks much older. He does not sit his nag so well; has not the same jaunty air; crouches his shoulders, and is loose about the knees; has altogether a furtive, suspicious, and timid aspect, as if he were more than half afraid even when boldest. But he is attentive enough to personal comfort and dignity. His stout pantaloons are covered with leather boots to the knees; over his warm under-dress he wears a short cloak or mantle; his cocked hat is carefully tied under his chin; and he displays with curious pride and ostentation a chain of office even when going about the most common business. The chain is very prominent this morning. He has clasped it round the neck of his cloak. It would be idle to ask whether he is armed. This is a man who could scarce draw a trigger. But he is ready to fish in troubled waters; and

there is a remarkable mixture of supple duplicity and selfish shrewdness in the background of his nature. He passes easily over to what he believes to be the stronger side, and is equally prone to swear profanely or pray devoutly, not from any deep emotion of his own nature, but from what the fashion may be.

The lad in attendance on this strangely contrasted pair would hardly be worth describing but for an odd resemblance between him and the diminutive pony he rode. It was covered with rough and shaggy hair from the head to the tail; had a straw saddle and a straw bridle. He was scarcely less shaggy himself. Over long locks of matted and weather-beaten hair he wore a dingy straw hat, and twists of straw were wound round his ankles by way of complementing some deficiency of garment at that extremity. His middle

garb was what one may truly call *déshabillé*. Yet the youth was sharp and alert in his movements both of body and mind. It seemed alike to him whether he was running or riding, and he leaped off and on the straw saddle as cleverly as a performer in the circus. When falling too far in rear of the stronger nags of his leaders, he took to his feet, and the pony galloped after him; and, gaining ground in this way, would mount again, when the pony as surely began to take the pace more easy. There appeared to be a perfect mutual understanding between the two.

After gambolling a little to the dragoons so gravely posted at the gate of the old tower, showing them how possible it was to stand on one's head, and even walk on one's hands, to their no small amusement, the urchin ran forward, the pony after him, just as the two riders were

abandoning themselves to gaiety of spirit and enjoyable conversation.

"What a fine caller morning!" said the man of office to his jolly companion, and the jolly companion began to sing a little country ditty:—

"'Tween Wigtown and the town o'Ayr,
Portpatrick and the Cruives o' Cree,
Nae man need think to bide lang there,
Unless he court wi' Kennedie."

"Pooh!" he added, "there's the Cruives o' Cree before us; but that's an auld sang noo."

"The Kennedies," said the other, "have lang been dead branches in Galloway, and they were an ill-faured set, be hanged to them, and did naebody ony gude. But ithers, who noo haud their heeds as hie—the Stewarts, Dalrymples, and Agnews—are a' driving doon the same gate. As for the Gordons, they are a woe-stricken and

scattered kind o' folk that nae gude will ever come frae ava. The Grahams are assuredly the coming men noo."

The jolly companion here gave a low whistle, but what he was whistling at no one could possibly have divined. He seemed to be looking down to the front shoe of his horse.

"Didn't ye see the prood commanding e'e o' Clavers as he swept roon the To'booth yesterday at the heed o' his followers. He's a first cousin, man, o' the great Marquis o' Montrose, than whom a braver man never stood in leather shoon or louped into a saddle. He fought first for the Covenant, then for the king, then for the Covenant again, and went on sae, but aye the same brave and consistent man throughoot, fechting for his king and country. This talk about religion is mere trash. It's loyal possession—that's the real thing. A' thae

lands," and here the man of office gave himself an expansion of figure on the saddle, unusual to him, as he said with heroic anticipation, "will be the lands o' the Grahams directly, and o' them wha hae common sense to follow them."

"Weel, I canna see quite so far as that, my frien' and lovite," said the jolly companion. "But ae thing I am sure o'—we're a' weel entitled to mak' hay while the sun shines;" and under this comfortable reflection the jolly companion broke into song again,—

"O waly, waly, up yon bank
And waly, waly, down yon brae,
And waly by yon river's side
Where I and my love wont to gae.
Waly, O, gin love be bonny,
A little while when it is new;
But when it's auld, it waxes cauld,
And wears awa' like morning dew."

And so on, from stave to stave, and song

to song, the voice of the Drover rang through the birch woods in trills impossible to follow, but both amusing and delaying the progress of the party up the track to Glenvernoch; while with the Drover's voice were mingled the song of birds startled and flying from tree to tree. As for the shaggy lad and pony, they had not felt so much at ease, and so entirely of one mind, at any other part of the journey.

CHAPTER III.

Awa, ye selfish war'ly race,
Wha think that having sense and grace,
E'en love and friendship should give place
To *catch the plack!*
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack!
Burns.

When the farmer of Glenvernoch walked down to the gate leading to his house he was just in time to hear musical echoes of

"Kyle for a man,
Carrick for a coo,
Cunninghame for butter and cheese,
And Galloway for woo!"

—when on a sharp turn of the road the

singing party came in sight. The farmer recognized at once, in one of the leading figures, Tam Picardy, who had been a small farmer himself, but finding the work of the fields too plodding for his expansive nature, had become a drover, bought on commission for barons and other gentlemen, and occasionally struck a small bargain for his own hand; and in the other a fussy and worth-little Bailie of Wigtown, who had been very active of late, rising, as he thought, on an unprecedented tide of affairs.

"Certes, freins," said Glenvernoch when they came up, "ye hae been oot early this morning. What may your errand be?"

"Ah!" said the Bailie, reaching out his hand to the farmer, which was not refused, "it's the early bird, Glen, ye ken, that catches the worm."

"That may be vera true," said the

farmer, "gif there happen to be a worm. But it's no every morning there's a worm, Bailie. Tam, is that you, my man?" added the farmer, addressing the Bailie's companion. "I daursay thou'll be wanting to look at some nowt."

Picardy, who had already dismounted, put his hand on the shoulder of the farmer, saying, "Ye've strack the nail on the head there, Glen, as ye gey aftin do in a' your observes. We mean, if it be your wull, to look ower the maist marketable stock awee, and gie ye a lang price for onything worth tacking awa'."

"Weel, ma cheil," said Glenvernoch, "I'se nae doot I hae something to sell. There's a pickle three-year-aulds in the infield preparing for the Martinmas, whilk I'll be glad to show ye, Tam; and if ye've gude commissions and siller, of which in the presence of your walthy freen here,

the Bailie, there can be nae mickle doot, we will maybe agree. Things are rising, I hear. Ye'll be wanting to lay in store o' meat for the airmy in the winter. There should be nae better paymaster than the Government that rules ower us a'."

"There ye're at your auld drives, Glen," said Tam, rather alarmed at the self-confident spirit of the farmer. "Ye're raising the market aboon a' common sense. The Government, ye ken weel eneuch, tak' what meat they want without paying onything ava. It's no wi' sic gilravagers that an honest man like me can hope to turn an honest penny."

"Weel, weel," said Glenvernoch, "we needna staun' haverin' and buying a pig in a poke here. We'll tie the beesties to the yett, and ye'll come awa' wi' me. I haena an empty stall jist noo. We're bringing in the peats, and a' the horses and creels

are aboot oor hauns. What are ye stauning on your head there for, ye wull-cat?" added the farmer, addressing the lad; "come atten', thou ne'er-do-weel, to the maisters, and help to tie up the nags."

The Bailie, who had admired the diplomacy of Tam in pretending unutterable dislike to any dealings with the Government, was not a little disconcerted at this outside courtesy of the farmer, and the strong-willed way in which he seemed to dispose of every movement. But he saw plainly enough that his chain of office, whatever weight it might have in Wigtown, had but little glitter on the farm of Glenvernoch; and so he addressed himself to the fawning ways in which he was more at home than in any exercise of magisterial authority.

"Hoo's the mistress?" asked the Bailie, in his blandest tone, as they approached

the farm-house. "It wudna be gude breeding to gang by without paying oor respects to the mistress."

"The mistress is no very ill ava, thank you," said Glenvernoch; "she's only a wee delicate. We canna 'veniently see her enoo. But we'll maybe gi'e her a ca' when we come back doon the grun'. Hollo! Sandy; rin awa' man, and bring the three-year-aulds to the knowe that the dealers may see them."

The Bailie and his companion had to follow the farmer in each step of his arrangements, however much these lay out of the line of their own plans; no opening was left for any reversal; and they could only adjust with dumb signs to each other what their next move should be. The Bailie looked quite angrily and impulsively at Picardy when he thought of the horses tied at the gate, and the ordinary civility

of being allowed to reconnoitre the inmates of the farm-house so curtly evaded.

"Hoo mony head o' sheep may there be on Glenvernoch?" at length inquired the audacious drover, as the party proceeded to the knoll.

"I declare, Tam, ye were na blate a' your life, but ye're raither in excess o' your ordinar' freedom this morning," said Glenvernoch. "The laird himsel' has never speered me sic a question. But ye wad maybe like to buy the hail stock?"

"Na, na; Gude forbid!" replied the drover, throwing as much humour and friendliness into his manner as the gravity of the circumstances would admit. "Ye're better in yer shoon, Glen, than ever I can hope to be in mine. I was only thinking what mony an honest man like you may lose in thae times."

"Sad and woefu' times," added the Bailie. "Ye canna consave, Glenvernoch, wi' what grief I saw Castle Stewart this morning in possession of the dragoons. And the report, indeed, in the burgh yesterday was that the Baron himsel' had fled awa' to the low countries."

"Vera wae to hear what ye say, Bailie, vera wae. Lairds should protect their tenants, and tenants in that case would maybe protect lairds frae a' disturbance. But it's sae sad, I hope it mayna be a' true what ye hae heard, and ony rate it needna stop a fair bargain. There's Sandy coming ow'r the knowe tap wi' the nowt. But deil tak' that wull-cat o' yours! He's aye stauning on his head or rinning for-rit. Come back, boy—ye'll frichten the cattle, ye ne'er-do-weel."

A fine herd was brought before the eye of the Bailie and the drover on the knowe-

side. They might be a score and a half or more, but they were all of a piece.

"They are real Gallowas," said Picardy, who was too good a judge both of man and beast to imagine that any advantage could be gained by depreciation of the stock.

"Gallowas, verily," said the farmer. "Ye ken weel, Tam, there's nae Ayrshire or Eerish naither on Glenvernoch. When a white spot or ony mark o' wrang bluid appears, they are slain at ance or sent to the flesher. They never get beyond the size of mere calves. What will ye gie for them, Tam, or you Bailie, by the head, or the score, or the three score, or this year and the next?"

The boy, seldom at rest, and moved by the inquiries of the farmer, began here to tickle the cattle with his switch.

"That's richt, lad," said Glenvernoch,

one hand stuck into his great waistcoat pocket, while beckoning with the other; "steer them roon' and roon', boy, and the langer they gang roon' the bigger they'll look. Arena they fine stoot beasts? Did you ever see better, Tam? What div ye offer, man, or you, Bailie, what's your propose?"

The Bailie could no more have met the keen and impetuous charge of the farmer in bargaining than he could have jumped over the steeple at Wigtown. He stood like one in a quandary, and left the case for the present in the hands of his companion.

"They're burly, gude beasts," said Picardy. "I dinna dispute that, Glen, save in twa or three. But it's no sae mickle what the thing is worth in thae days, or what the price should be, as what ye're to dae wi't when ye hae got it. The reiving enoo exceeds a' the days o' the

Black Douglasses. A drove may be whupped awa in a minute, even on the public road, and the deil a ane dar' question onything aboot the robbery. Its a' dune in the King's name, God bless his innocent Majesty! As for the barons and the lairds they are maistly under hiding or fled the country in some ill-wull o' their ain, and there's nae sic markets as we hae seen in the Machars for weel-bred and hardy hill stock like yours. Naebody seems to want stock ava. It's a' the ither wye. Every ane wushing to get rid o't and nane to tak' it on. Sae ye see it's no sae easy dealing when baith pairties are on the wrang side o' the hedge. But, noo, I'll gif ye an offer, Glen, the like o' whilk was never gi'en to ony man but your-sel' in sic like circumstances. Twelve pund Scots a-head, Glen, for what we see afore us. We hae had many sma'

dealings, but they may be lairger, and baith o' us ootleeve the bad times, to say 'it's an ill wun' that blaws naebody gude.'"

"Thou's a fair-spoken chiel, Tam, always was," said Glenvernoch. "But twelve punds Scots, man, is only ae pund sterling, and ye canna mean that that is fair price for prime Gallowas o' sic age and bane as thae."

"Ay!" replied the drover, "true; but there is ane, Glen, ye'll probably admit yoursel', is sae lang and hollow in the back that it may be dooted whether it has ony bane to boast o'."

"Weel, Tam," rejoined Glenvernoch, "we'll tak' that ane oot to please ye. It'll be gude saut beef for oorsels this winter or the next. But twelve punds Scots! I maun hae mair merks than that, gude sooth; and hoo do ye mean to pay gin we should niffer?"

"Half money doon," said Tam, "and t'ither half payable at sax months' date in Wigtown, under sure caution," looking on the last words straight to the Bailie.

"The best security, I assure you, Glenvernoch, oor toon and legality can give, and that's nae sma' word," promptly added the Magistrate.

"Drive the beasts back to the infield, Sandy," cried the farmer to his man. "We are no likely to deal, I doot. And you, boy," addressing the urchin, "rin awa doon to the yett, and see that the naggies are no ravelling their bridles, and dinna tumble so much on your head, ye mislear'd cratur, but stan' on your feet like an ordinar' wise human."

Having made these emphatic dispositions, both of his own forces and the forces of his visitors, Glenvernoch turned his steps down the Knoll, followed closely by the

drover and the Bailie, one on each side—the trio being soon absorbed in the most engaging conversation. Picardy tickled the farmer on one side by assurances how well he knew him of old, that he was a hard man to deal with, which was right and proper enough in its own place, and entitled him to all the more honour among his friends, of which he (Tam) was one; but Glen was displaying an ignorance of the state of the country at the present time, which to Picardy appeared lamentable. While the Bailie, on the other side, pressed on Glenvernoch the surety of his own name, the name of the Provost which he did not doubt could be obtained if need be, and, indeed, "the new Sherra" might be relied upon to give a legal warrant to the bond which no similar document had ever had before.

"I need not say with what pain I must

tell you," at length said the supple Bailie, when he found that all he had said before had failed to make the least impression on the stolid Glenvernoch, "as only ane in 'the Cooncils,' I may say like mysel', could tell ye, that your farm may be quartered upon immediately, whan the stock micht a' vanish from your een, leaving nae value in your hands, and only dule and wurry in your heart. The recusants are gathering a little north o' ye, and ye're mair than half suspect, Glenvernoch, of encouraging and harbouring the rogues and fanatics that wad upset the peace o' the country. To drive close-fisted bargains in sic times is fulishness. Ye should think twice or even thrice before rejecking a gude offer."

"I am mickle obleeged for your information, Bailie," said the farmer. "The times are certainly very kittle, as ye say, but we maun haud oor gear as lang as we

can, and they wha may be strang enough to reeve our nowt, wad tak our siller also, mair particularly gin it should be bonds in Wigtown. And as we are noo at the yett, and your nags, I see, are a' ready, I must bid you guid morning, wi' mony thanks, Bailie, and you too, Tam, hoping ye may fin' a better market for us puir farmers."

The parting was friendly enough in all outward civility. But neither the drover nor the Bailie had much satisfaction from their encounter with the farmer of Glenvernoch. He had exercised a lordship over not only his cattle, but his house and land, and the movement of his visitors, which did not consort in the least with their plans and prepossessions of the previous night. The drover had a disappointed air, relieved by a genial jollity of spirit as if he had other fish to fry, and did not care much for one disappointment; while the Bailie bit

and chewed his lips in a peevish malignity. But what struck the farmer most at the moment was that, without the least communication with each other, Picardy and his attendant departed northward towards "the Caldons," while the Bailie rode back alone the way he had come.

Gilbert Wilson was in much darkness as to what was passing in other parts of the shire, with only such light as his own native shrewdness might throw around his immediate personal circumstances, and such cross lights as public affairs themselves might suddenly throw in upon this private sphere of his. But, in returning to the farmhouse in time for the usual dinner, he had no difficulty in concluding that "the cocked-hat body," as he called the Wigtown Bailie, had not come to Glenvernoch without some purpose beyond what appeared on the surface; that Tam Picardy was a

Free Lance—on one side to-day, on another to-morrow—and that what he had experienced in a few hours might be the prelude of more serious events to himself and his household.

CHAPTER IV.

God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid;
Therefore, although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid.

Psalm.

Margaret, as Glenvernoch went out to meet the Bailie and the drover, conducted Martha to a small upper room, entered from the head of a stair, about the middle of the long farm-house. The ceiling of this apartment was high enough on one side for even a tall person to stand erect; but it sloped down to the eaves of the house on the other. The only light was from a casement in the slanting roof. Here they had read the Bible,

talked, and worked together. But it would have served also as a place of retreat in the event of a search of the house. It was entered by a shutter, sliding back and forward on grooves in the front of what seemed a press or rude wardrobe, and this was hung round, indeed, with many articles of dress, behind which a door, having a strong bar on the inner side, opened into the little room.

When the two young women had seated themselves under the skylight, and began to knit, Martha at length said, "Your father, Margaret, has an anxious time, and I doot I may be the cause o't."

"He is o'er troubled aboot many things," replied Margaret; "I wish he had mair firmness. His notion is to yield ootside and protec' himsel' at hame, compleeing ootwardly and hadding inwardly, till I fear there mayna be a conviction left in his mind,

or a stick o' the hoose standing abune oor heads."

"That is just the way of my own good father," said Martha. "But Sir David is an old man, and could hardly be expected to take the brave courses which younger men have taken and may take again. Yet how it grieved him to yield! When he took the Test, after most of the other gentlemen had complied, I thought it would have broken his heart. He didna' speak a word to anybody about Baldoon for three days. He knew that no power could prevail on me to take the Test but his own, if even that. Yet he never said the word. He always took my part, was always on my side, often as the question came. One day, while he was in distress over another warning that had been served frae Wigtown about me, I said to him, 'Father, would you like me to take the Test?' 'Na, na',

he said, 'my young woman, I winna press ye. Keep your conscience virgin as lang as ye can. It is the staff of life to man and woman. They canna hae the heart to proceed, surely, when they hae woonded me, and when Davie, who was soon to be in my place, not only took the Test, but conformed, was hand-and-glove wi' the curate, Symson, and a favourer of a' their plans.' But in this my good father was mistaken, and when I had to be arrested, he said,—"

Martha's eyes began to fill with tears, and it was with some difficulty she could proceed.

"He said, 'Dear Martha, thou maun leave thy auld faither for thine ain gude and for his. It wad kill me to see thee carried to thae filthy jails.' He would provide for me in Lunnon or ony other foreign place I might choose. But how, Margaret, could I go abroad when Willie Hay was still an outlaw amang thae hills, and trust-

ing to me—" The young lady, under what seemed a strong mental conflict, did not finish the sentence. A blush spread over her face, and turning pale again in a proud effort to recover herself, she added with eyes full of fire,—

"Do you know, Margaret, what I would do? I would fight; though but a woman, I would fight as long as strength remained in my arm. Oh! I wonder the people do not fight as their brave forefathers fought."

"Weel, I wadna just say that," replied Margaret, looking to her companion with wistful interest, and with that expression of her eyes which seemed to shake away from her all the troubles of the world. "Our Lord, gif ye mind, told Peter to put up the sword in the greatest agony of His spotless life, and it is written, whae slay with the sword will dee by the sword. But I would fecht oor enemies to the last wi' the weepons

o' faith. I wad hae folk to stand to what they believe to be true and richt—to disguise nae licht o' conscience or witness o' Divine grace in their hearts—to yield no a shaving o' the kingdom within, or to comply with onything false or contrar in the kingdom without—but present at a' times to the rage and fire o' the persecutors the bare breests o' sincere conviction. If a' were to do this, what wad the force o' Clavers and his pickles o' dragoons be? What could the wicked and ill-set craturs do? They might rage, and sweer, and blaspheme, and commit many cruel deeds for a wee time, but they wad be abashed and frowned awa' in their darkness by a great licht, and a valiant faith in the hearts o' a', whilk they could nae mair cut and slash wi' their swords than they could draw bluid frae the sunshine o' heevin. Aren't we told, Martha, that Satan himsel' flees

awa' when reseested in this mainner? It's the yieldings and compleeances that hae wrocht maist o' thae sad troubles. Every saftness inveetes a new wrang, and they hae nae suner got an inch than they maun hae an ell, till there'll no be a spark o' faith left in the country, and little warldly substance aither, I ween, tho' our gude forbears hae so much care in their ain gate to keep it. For a' your faither or mine may say, Martha, I dinna think there is religion o' ony kind in the heart o' Clavers and his gang, or o' maist o' their superiors. It's the baronies, and the farms, and the gear they want. Gie them thae things, and be their hewers o' wood and drawers o' water, and they'll let ye attend as many conventicles, and be as worshipfu' in your ain way as ye please."

Martha, in listening to the words of the artless but deep-thinking girl, felt her momentary storm of anguish and agitation

passing away as in a dream, and it was in her usual bright humour, and with a smile almost breaking into one of her softly ringing laughs, she said in a kind of ecstasy of new feeling, "Oh! Margaret, you are a prophetess—an angel," as she rose and put her arms round her companion, and kissed her eyelids in succession. "What a sweet day we'll hae!" she added, on resuming her seat. "Go on talking, Margaret, do; I could listen to you for hours."

The knitting went on silently again for a little.

Martha was the first to break the silence.

"What will the end o' thae troubles be, Margaret? or do ye see any end o' them, dear?"

"Hae patience, Mistress Martha," rejoined Margaret. "The clouds will pass away. I canna believe we're a' lost yet, though many sad deeds may be done, and

there may be many puir victims. Until a higher speerit rises amang the people—if no here, somewhere else—there can be little hope o' mendin', and I'm preparing for ony ill it may be the Divine will to chasteese us wi'. But the gude seed was thickly sawn in thae pairts in my younger days, and the buds gave promise o' ither fruit than has yet been seen. Oh! Martha, what a change has fallen on us! We may say that Lazarus is dead and buried. But Lazarus was brought to life again by a Divine word, and there's nae room for despair. But this backsliding and dule are waur to bide than the snaws o' winter, for there's nae licht or blink o' sunshine aboon them. Ye ken it a' better than I can do."

"There is a great change indeed," said Martha. "I can no more recall my young-girl days, when religion and happiness seemed to flow in the same stream. But

you are so much younger, you may be said to have been born in the troubles."

"I weel remember," continued Margaret, "when John Welsh—the great-grandson o' John Knox, blamed for Bothwell Brig, where your Willie was — held his great communion in this parish, and an outdoor preaching at Risk, on the ither side o' the water—my faither and mither were baith there, wi' me, a wee bit lassie, in their haun —and the croods that flocked frae a' quarters! with what fervour o' devotion and singleness o' heart they waited on the services, hoo they hung on the lips o' the gudely man as he expounded the saving truths o' the Word that had come doon to him in unbroken line frae the Great Reformer, and held up oor Saviour as the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only Head o' the Church to every ane, and His power to save to the ootermost a' that come to Him, and

follow Him, trusting to His death and merits, and taking from His lips the simple law o' love to God and to man—till many grat, and a' their hardness o' heart, a' their sins, and their perverse and self-ways o' looking at things seemed to melt doon in the abounding love and joy o' a new life! And as they left the place o' worship, and returned to their hames, hoo every ane strengthened anither, their hearts alowe within them, and making a' manner of sacred vows to their Maker and their consciences. When I think o'this, and what I see noo, I can but fain believe I am leevin' in the same country. It is like a heavenly dream from which one has been shaken. Yet it was the power of God, and canna be a dream. But sae great a backsliding in oor short time, Martha, canna gang by without mony and awfu' judgments."

To the daughter of Baldoon, at this

period, these words of Margaret Wilson were most welcome and heart-stirring. They not only chimed in harmony with her own religious consciousness, but they revealed a purity of spirit and heroism of character in this humble sister of the hills which, under all her own recent experience and present prospects, were like cordial to her heart. Hope had almost fled from Martha. Driven from her paternal hearth and companionship, she had been a wanderer for some time in the houses of hospitable farmers and shepherds, partly against her father's will, but in sympathy with her lover, the outlawed William Hay of Arioland. But Martha, in her warm feelings and in the natural buoyancy of her spirit, still clung to hope, or any ray of hope.

"Dinna ye think, Margaret," she said, "it may not be so great a backsliding? The folk, after a' the testing, dragooning,

and imprisoning, remain much the same. They do not flock to the curates under the new law more than under the old. Is it not more like the shaking o' the trees under a passing wind?"

Margaret, raising her eyes from the needles to her companion, with a deeper seriousness, said, "Mistress Martha, ye may never hae spoke a truer word. It's a passing storm and nae mair. But ae generation mauna pass its ain defections so lichtly on the back o' anither. If a' folk, in a' times, are to be willy-wagtails, flichtering here ae moment and there the next, and trees not only to waver but brake in their stem, and fa' into ruin, it's no to be hoped that in oor short lifetime, Martha, there can be mickle remeid."

There was a long pause at this point in the conversation of the two young women. Martha was silent because, under what

Margaret had said, she had a great deal to think of; and Margaret was silent because she felt she had said more than might be agreeable to her companion, and than she herself might see all the world-like meaning of.

"When did ye hear o' Mr. Hay?" at length ventured Margaret, to whom the silence was becoming every minute more painful.

"I hae nae secrets from you, Margaret, and I can well trust your pure and true heart," said Martha sadly; "but weeks hae passed since I had any one to speak to as I can speak to him."

Martha was ready enough to disburden her absorbing thought at the moment; but the daughter of Glenvernoch, so much younger, had impressed her with a sense of delicacy approaching to awe, as if it would be wrong to speak to her freely on a love

affair; and she checked herself under a feeling of propriety and self-distrust.

"The brave young man," Margaret immediately proceeded to say, "he rode up to the door in the early summer, but was sae feered to compromeese us, he would neither licht doon, nor take bite or sup. My father convoyed him a bit up the road, and I looked after him, thinking whatna shame it was that the flower o' the country should be brought to sicna straits."

"Ye hae seen Hay then?" said Martha, with a more joyous expression playing over her usually happy features.

"I hae seen him," replied Margaret, "but it was only an instant, and I hae heard o' him mair than I hae seen. He is the only ane noo spared o' a' the Galloway youths oot in the risings at Drumclog, Bothwell, and ither places, of which I hae nae knowledge, I was sae young a thing

then. The only rebels permitted are Ravenston and oor ain laird, Castle-Stewart. A' the rest hae been driven awa, or hunted doon, and transported to the foreign slavery, except William Hay o' Arioland."

Martha's heart was beating high at these words of Margaret, and she would have risen, and clasped the girl's hands in hers, and probably vented her feeling in some distracting utterance; but, bridling the fervent impulse, she said, with some sedateness, but not without passion,—

"Supposing, Margaret, ye loved Willie Hay as yourself, and much more than yourself, what would ye do?"

"Do?" replied Margaret, "I scarce ken what ye mean by the question. I wad love him and be true to him, and a' the mair that he himsel' was true to the great cause."

"I saw him," said Martha, "shortly before I came doon from the herd's house to Glenvernoch, and if nae ill has befa'n him, I will see him again soon now, at the trysting-place up the inner glen. Ye will come wi' me, Margaret, if we are no disturbed. Winna ye come wi' me? It is nae conspiracy. But we like to see each ither."

"Why shouldna I gang wi' ye, Martha, if ye should wish me? I dinna like ony dark ploys, and my faither is very jeelous aboot a' the doings on the farm. But I am no ane to think the lan' and the sunlicht are forbidden to ony o' God's creatures. As lang as I leeve and hae poo'r o' limb and will, I'll move aboot in what is gude, honest, and freenly, as free as ony bird that sings in the shaw, or ony leveret that skips, tho' maybe fearfu', on the hill."

CHAPTER V.

On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east.

Milton.

On the same day of which we have given a record of proceedings on the usually quiet farm of Glenvernoch, the following among other incidents had occurred within the bounds of a few adjacent parishes:—

The widowed Lady of Arioland was taken prisoner in her jointure house on a charge of harbouring and resetting rebels, among whom was particularly mentioned her second

son, William Hay. On being asked whether she had seen William within a recent time, she replied with some fire, "Why not? Wha daur to come atween the love o' a mother and her son?" and when pressed with other interrogatories, she would not deny that she had allowed "conventicles" in her house. "My hoose is my ain," she said. "Ane may surely worship God in ane's ain house, if naewhere else." On being then asked whether she had harboured any other rebel than her son William, or that vagrant preacher Arnot, she indignantly refused to give any more answers. "Gie awa' wi' ye, and mind your ain business, and let ither folk mind theirs. Shame on ye, Mr. Fiscal, that ye should buzz about what disna concern yoursel' or the public." The officer of the law, with as much politeness as could serve on such an occasion, was sorry to inform the old lady that he had a warrant

from Sheriff Graham for her apprehension, and put the document into her hand. On perusing the warrant, she said to her daughter, the only inmate with her at the time, "Alack the day, Maggie, that the Gordons should be lorded over by the Græmes, and in Gallowa' of a' places in the warl'." "Oh, mother, dear mother!" cried the daughter, throwing her arms round the neck of the distressed lady—"the dragoons are at the door, and there is nae help near;" and clung round her mother in tears and sobbing.

The Lady of Arioland was a kinswoman of the House of Lochinvar, and a daughter of the Gordons of Craichlaw, represented by her brother and two nephews of her own, who were among the few landed families in Wigtownshire who had refused up to this date to take "the test," though willing enough to take the oath of allegiance. The

relationship of the old lady was probably to her disadvantage in the estimation of the authorities; but it was the case of her son William, who had been under ban since the battle of Bothwell Brig, that chiefly pointed the vengeance of the Government upon her grey head. She was forthwith torn from the arms of Maggie Hay, and carried to the tolbooth of Wigtown, where she was locked up with two married women of more humble life, under a charge much similar to her own, viz., having confessed the harbour of their husbands within a year and a half bypast, and refused to give satisfaction as to what they would do in future. Before night closed, the cell in which the three women were confined had to receive a fourth, with an infant at her breast.

In the same parish as Glenvernoch, on that day, the myrmidons of Sheriff Graham went to the house of Sara Stewart or

Kennedy, wife of Mr. Kennedy, minister in Ireland, and a Galloway freeholder *in matrimonio*, with whom Glenvernoch had a passing word in his flight during the early hours of the morning. Mrs. Kennedy had herself conformed to the new *régime*, and attended the service of the curate, Colquhoun, in the parish church, but had confessed that she had harboured her husband within the last quarter of a year, and was silent as to where her husband then was, or when he would return, on both of which items of information Mrs. Kennedy may herself have been ignorant, and thus could only be silent. But it is not improbable that she had a partiality for her husband and the father of her children. She was arrested with still more ruthless barbarity than the Lady of Arioland. The party of soldiers accompanying the Sheriff's officers, under sanction of a new order from the

Privy Council in Edinburgh that "all rebels' houses were to be pulled down," unroofed Sara's cottage, set fire to its inflammable material, and compelled her to trudge before them with her infant in her arms to Wigtown, leaving her older children to the charity of the affrighted neighbours. In this sad and desolate plight Mrs. Kennedy and her babe were thrust into the cell with the other women.

Hunter, Linloslin, and several more were also apprehended in the same district on charges of having had "the rebel Kennedy" in their houses, or having had children baptized by the said Kennedy, "minister in Ireland." It is probable that Kennedy, in his office of a Presbyterian minister in Ulster, had rendered himself obnoxious to the ruling powers by his missionary labours in Galloway, and the harbour of refuge which he may have been supposed to keep open

in the sister island to fugitives from the justice of the time. But his wife who had conformed, and his children who were *innocentes*, were within the bowels of mercy, if the justice of the time had any.

CHAPTER VI.

Pre-eminent among the bands which oppressed and wasted these unhappy districts were the dragoons, commanded by John Graham of Claverhouse. The story ran that these wicked men used in their revels to play at the torments of hell, and to call each other by the names of devils and damned souls. The chief of this Tophet has left a name which, wherever the Scottish race is settled on the face of the globe, is mentioned with a peculiar energy of hatred. To recapitulate all the crimes by which this man, and men like him, goaded the peasantry of the Western Lowlands into madness, would be an endless task.

Macaulay.

THE executive vigour proceeding day after day from Wigtown over a single province could only mark an impending crisis of affairs. It had for its immediate impulse

the arrival not only of Claverhouse, but of the Marquis of Queensberry, Lord Treasurer of Scotland, and Lord Drumlanrig—the chief ministers of the Crown, who had come to this remote province in great state and authority with "the Sheriff" to effect an absolutely necessary jail delivery, and to close effectually, by whatever harshness, some years of stern though unsuccessful administration. It was the third or fourth visit Claverhouse had paid to Galloway, each of which had been marked in succession by increasing rigour alike to the gentry and the common people, but this one outstripped the others in State importance.

His first visit was when he was only a military *commissionnaire* of the Government, and in this capacity had been foisted by the Privy Council, contrary to law and custom, on the Hereditary Sheriff Agnew as a depute,

so that he might have some say in the administration of justice, and more especially in the enforcement of the Anti-Conventicle Act, in the punishment of violations of which the Hereditary Sheriff was suspected at head-quarters to be much too lenient. But Clavers, at this humble period of his career, had at his back the "Highland Host," 6000 strong—wild soldiers, who cared neither for King nor Covenant, but at so great a distance from a scanty home had a natural appetite for good living and plunder—and this great army, as armies counted at that period, was chiefly quartered in Galloway and in Carrick of Ayrshire. Clavers, or his quartermaster, quartered them where they only could be quartered—in the castles of the barons, in the houses of the more substantial farmers or burgesses, and wherever there was anything to eat or to steal. There was not a groat, honestly come by, in the

military chest. A large consignment of "the host" was sent to Lochnaw Castle, the residence of Clavers's principal in the judicial office, till the old Sheriff, what with noise of Gaelic and general disorder and contempt of all religion and decency of life in his Castle, having first removed his family and then tried to live through the chaos himself, was at length forced, in sheer despair, into a cave on Larbrax Bay, where he spent most of his days and nights in such sad times. The fate of Sir Andrew Agnew was more or less the fate of nearly the whole baronage of Galloway.

The Anti-Conventicle Act, in these circumstances, had a vigorous administration. Claverhouse was so zealous a servant of the Government that he rather exceeded than fell short of the cruelty so pleasing to James Duke of York, who had become so unpopular and inconvenient in London that

Charles, in one of his freakish but fatal pleasantries, sent him down as Viceroy to ruin the affairs of the Crown in Scotland. And, with equal faithfulness, Clavers seconded the extortion and avarice of the minister, Lauderdale, and the boundless prodigality of Lauderdale's wife. At the same time this military *commissionnaire* was carefully reconnoitring and foraging for himself; and on looking round on the scene of desolation in Galloway, he thought that, to begin with, he might be "Laird of Freuch," the owner of which, a branch of the great family of Garthland, was a favourer of Presbyterian worship, and of such high spirit as to be likely enough to be driven mad by oppression.

This situation of affairs may be said to cover the years 1677-80, and it was the miserable state to which Claverhouse and "the host" had reduced the country that

explains why so many Galloway men—men of family and property—armed themselves, and, mounted on the hardy horses of their country, mingled in the military frays—Aird's Moss, Drumclog, Bothwell Brig, &c.—of these years. Life had become so intolerable that not a few were willing to risk all on any battlefield that might offer.

The next most memorable visit of Claverhouse to Wigtown was in 1681-2, when for "his services and sufferings" a charter under the Great Seal had issued granting him all the lands and houses, yards, orchards, mills, woods, fishings, moors, &c., "haill and pertinent," of Galdenoch, "now called of Freuch;" and another deed had appointed him "Sheriff of Galloway," sole and indivisible, with power to nominate deputes.

M'Dowall of Freuch—his mansion ravaged by "the host," and turned into a barrack

for dragoons—was found guilty in the High Court of having been seen at the head of some hundreds of rebels on the moors between Sanquhar and Hamilton, and of being in the affair of Bothwell Bridge; was attainted, and "his memory cut off for ever." Ravenston and Castlestewart, brothers of the Earl of Galloway, were implicated in a similar indictment, but were able to prove that if "out," or not in their own houses at the time, they were not in the fight. Thus Claverhouse found the first step on the ladder of his aggrandisement secured, and took care to see Freuch's coat-of-arms torn out of the book of heraldry and thrown over the cross of Edinburgh with sound of trumpet, that the dispossessed might be the more thoroughly extinguished. The supercession of the Hereditary Sheriff in his favour followed as a matter of course, and a more brilliant prospect seemed to dawn upon him

than on any of the Agnews when they had basked in the sunshine of the Bruce.

He came on that occasion with much pomp. The escort of dragoons with which he left Edinburgh was swelled at every post when he entered the bounds of the Sheriffdom; and as the cavalcade passed through one of the narrow flanking vennels of the burg, mid the swelling sounds of trumpets and kettledrums, and formed before the Tolbooth in circle, with Claverhouse in the centre, the heads of the burgesses were nearly lifted from their shoulders by that mingled feeling of awe and exultation which, in the most timid and doubtful bosoms, accompanies an unwonted display of military fanfaronade. It was so unlike the most imposing entries of the Hereditary Sheriff, with a few retainers and mounted lawyers in his train, that it appeared to many like a new world, of which by some magic process

the old Castle-hill of Wigtown had become the centre.

"This is a grand business," said the Bailie to the Sheriff-Clerk, as they withdrew from the proudest military display either of them had witnessed.

"I'm no sae shure aboot it," replied the Clerk; "he may mak' a total change in the clerkship."

"Hoot, toot, man," said the Bailie, "ye're an unco dunce in common matters to be sae learned in the law. It's the first thing he'll dae to nominate a clerk, nae doot. But he's no thinking about that sma' concern. It's the deputes, man, and the law, and the inforcements whar' the changes will be. Jist ye write oot a bit decree o' coort—write it oot the nicht, and hae it ready for him in the mornin'. But, that's as true, hoo will ye style him? He's sic a great man noo. Let me see, na. Div ye

think this wadna be becoming—' Most illustrous and most pueessant John, Lord o' Claverhouse, Baron o' Freuch, Sherra o' Gallowa', and Commander-in-Chief o' a' His Majesty's forces, hereby—hereby—or by these presents greeting — appoints, and hereby, as by these presents greeting, does appoint (leave a blank here, ye ken) to be clerk o' this coort and sherradom, noo and inalienarly, for life and gude service, aye ' ? Wi' sic a document ready, man, ye'll find yer ain name drappin' into the blank as it were oot o' yer ain mooth."

The Sheriff-Clerk, though not satisfied with the Bailie's form of "style," availed himself so far of the shrewdness of the Magistrate, who was seldom much astray in the "booing" arts of life, as to prepare a minute in the record-book, beginning, ' The Right Noble Captain John Graham of Claverhouse, on taking the office of

Sheriff, ordains to be Sheriff-Clerk;" which Claverhouse, in a formal sitting in the Court next day, filled up with the name of the *locum tenens*, as the Bailie had imagined, and subscribed with an easy and careless flourish. In a subsequent entry he appointed his brother, Mr. David Graham, "Sheriff-Depute of the said Sheriff-Principal."

The character of this Claverhouse, who was destined to pass like a meteor through the sky of Scotland in a stormy period, has been subject of much study, and has been limned in the most various colours, from grimmest black to brightest aureole of chivalry. But he was in reality a much lighter person than either his foes or admirers have generally conceived him; and on this particular visitation to Galloway he probably appeared both to himself and to others in the best light that occurred to either in his

whole life. His hands were still unstained by blood, his conscience untorn by direct and horrible crimes into which brutal passion, drunk with success and with a physical sense of power, was soon after to drive him. But great position and great wealth were now within his grasp. This made him extremely agreeable to himself, and by a reflex action agreeable to others. Yet he had done absolutely nothing to merit, or nothing that could support, the elevation to which he had attained. His appointment to the Sheriffship of Galloway was simply an outrage on the most rudimental ideas of jurisprudence. For he knew no more of the laws of his country, or cared no more for its legal methods of justice, than any wild raven or eagle caught in its native state. But this was a defect which happily for himself at the moment he had not sense enough to perceive. Even

as a soldier, which was his more proper profession, he had no record of any note. He had been utterly defeated at Drumclog, and had owed his life greatly more on that occasion to the dying strides of his gallant roan than to any skill or bravery of his own; and he had helped to gain a narrow though decisive victory at Bothwell Brig, when backed by the popular Duke of Monmouth and the whole Royal Scotch array, more by the dissension thus thrown into the ranks of a body of provincial insurgents than by any valour or aptitude in battle. This was all Claverhouse as a soldier had to show. The rest was mere riding through an unarmed and defenceless country at the head of troops of dragoons, hectoring and bullying small congregations of people engaged in worship, or helpless peasants pursuing their daily avocations. He would have been a brave captain of

horse in any age or country, but would have required to be strictly ruled by his superior officers, unless, like Captain Nolan in the Crimea, he were to give at a critical moment, by an impulsive gesture, some fatal charge like that of the "Six Hundred." He had no comprehensive judgment of a battle or of anything else. One has to follow him as a mere Dragon-Fly, flaming through the atmosphere without any knowledge of it, but always winging steadily to the points where there seemed to be most prey and vainglory to himself, and at last going out, as at Killiecrankie, in a kind of victory that was a final and overwhelming defeat. We are not naturalists enough to know whether dragon-flies have hearts. But if they should have such commodities, a difference must be allowed in the figure here employed. For, we fear, it must be admitted, that Claver-

house, such was his evil time, circumstance, and self-inflation, had no heart in any proper sense of the word.

Yet, on the occasion in question, no one could have said that he was an ungraceful person. He was in much good humour; sought society, scattering smiles and courtesies around him freely; was kind even to the beggars who hung about his inn doors, and sometimes jested with the fools, or "naturals" as they were called, whom he met on the roads. In company with the higher classes of the shire, while maintaining with as much vehemence as ever his peculiar views of Church and King, he took blows and repartees in the argument with as much apparent good nature as he gave them. In short, he was not for that occasion the man he was accustomed to be when hunting down a conventicle on the moors—fierce, cruel, bloodthirsty, intolerant, headlong.

This change of manner was partly the result of the personal and official relation to Galloway in which he now stood, and partly of a policy that had been impressed upon him by the Government at Edinburgh. He could not fail to be aware that he was held in as much disfavour by the gentry and the great body of the people as ever. But he now wielded so great a power over their lives and fortunes, their smallest and largest interests, that he could afford to look with complacency on the means by which he might hope gradually to overcome their dislikes and scruples; and it was the dictate alike of pride and interest to enter on his high place with as much good-will as possible.

Claverhouse processed round the whole shire and stewartry of Galloway, from Stranraer to Dumfries. His presence everywhere inspired terror. "I can catch no-

body," he wrote, "they are all so alarmed." But he made a duty of seeing the higher personages and reassuring them of the safety of their houses. None would have a garrison sent upon them if they would only aid the Privy Council and him in duty to the King. At New Galloway he found that Kenmure was not to be seen, but he assured the lady of the solicitude of Queensberry to preserve her castle from being occupied by dragoons, for which she had some sense of gratitude. Kenmure himself, however, he denounced privately to Queensberry as, in his opinion, "an intercommuner with rebels." On a second visit he was still less pleased with the vicinity of Kenmure Castle, and broke into a tirade against the Galloway Gordons in general, wished they could all be transplanted to the North, and exchanged like prisoners of war for any other branch of

the family there, "where they are so loyal, while so utterly disaffected here." Everywhere in Galloway he scented treason and sedition in the Gordons, and the female blood of them was in nearly all the castles and farm-houses. With Lord Galloway and his brothers, Ravenston and Castle-Stewart, and some others, he established a sort of relation. But Kenmure he could make nothing of—"never at home"—and Claverhouse fancied that he must be conspiring with Barscobe and other outlaws. Yet he had much pleasure in adding, in one of his latest reports to the Privy Council, that "old Gordon of Craichlaw came in yesterday." Yet the two sons of the old laird were out, and, worse than all, Sir Andrew Agnew and Garthland were still out—would not come in at all yet. Murray of Broughton, and old Dunbar of Baldoon, whom "I had the good fortune to see," he

wrote, were also very doubtful subjects of the new Sheriff-Principal.

In following Claverhouse's private records of this tour, one perceives that he had a strong dislike to Lord and Lady Stair. Of Stair, who was busy writing his "Institutes of the Law," he complained that, while living regularly himself, he made no distinction in his house between loyal and disloyal people, and threw all blame, where any, on his wife! "I find all the lairds here," bitterly exclaimed Claverhouse, "following much the same example." And then he swore to Queensberry, as between themselves, that this jest must be stopped. "It is laughing and fooling the Government." Men must not be allowed to screen themselves under the petticoats of their wives, and wives must be looked after and punished as well as their husbands. His immediate remedy, proposed

to the Privy Council, was a hundred more dragoons—the horses to be raised and maintained in the country, but the men to be picked musketeers from the two Royal Regiments, and musketeers "who had served abroad!" Such was the result of the only visit of Claverhouse to Galloway, in which it was his cue and purpose to be courteous and agreeable; and this occurred about two years and a half before our story begins.

The last signal appearance of Clavers in Galloway was at the date of the opening of our narrative—autumn of 1684—when the Lord Treasurer and Drumlanrig came along with him. Two years of the new "Sheriff-Principal" and his depute-brother had brought affairs to such a distracted condition that a Royal Commission of this weight and authority appeared at head-quarters to be indispen-

sable. A few months in 1682, indeed, had been sufficient to exhaust all the oil in the nature of Claverhouse. He had found in that brief period, and reported to the Council, that "there were as many crocodiles and elephants in Galloway as loyal and orderly persons."

Before the end of the second quarter of Clavers' "Sheriffship of Galloway" the Test was being sent round the province with an activity and military pressure unknown at any former period. The Conventicle Act itself was difficult enough. Any one found field-preaching was to be executed within three hours of the deed; any one fleeing from the justice against field-preaching was, on being caught, to be executed with the same immediacy. The law, in its mildest form, was to judge and execute offenders within three months at latest. But what local baron, hereditary or other

magistrate, could enter on such dismal undertakings, more especially if they themselves should be more than half-suspected?

The elder Dalrymple, Lord Stair, to get rid of the fearful discords round him in his legal studies, migrated to Holland, taking his "Institutes of the Law" along with him. They were of no present use in Scotland, whatever value they might have in some future times. His proud-spirited wife followed him in the course of a few months, with a heart much more consolable than those of other dames at that period in Galloway, but yet aching with mingled grief, indignation, and disappointment of all her hopes of the future. Many ladies had received civil notice to quit the country, or were pressed by warrants and dragoons to abscond, if they should hope to avoid a much ruder fate.

Yet other laws had come forth in these

two years of the Clavers *régime* in Galloway, though it must be admitted (not to charge him more than his poor due) with full consent of the Privy Council at Edinburgh, involving a much more stringent state of personal and domestic regulation.

It was not enough to abstain from conventicling, and Presbyterian baptisms, and communings with "rebels." This negative form of the law, without rooting out conventicling, had emptied the parish churches, more especially as many avowed Conformists gave irregular attendance, not a few probably having, like Claverhouse himself, but little belief in religion under any form. The curates, who had been collected from all the four winds into the parishes of the "outed" ministers, had frequently to read the service *pro forma* to themselves and their beadles. The lieges were consequently required, by a new edict, to attend church

with their families, and to provide themselves with service-books on pain of being adjudged rebels, and punished by court-martial. The curates now got something to do. They were required to send in to head-quarters lists of all who were so uncivil to them as not to attend church and keep a service-book, which lists in some cases were a nearly complete roll of their parishioners. The area of seditious disobedience to the law being thus greatly enlarged, the area of fines expanded in equally vast proportions; and as the fines, by the custom of the time, went into the pockets of the Sheriff and his depute and sub-deputes, under an indefinite liability to "the Treasury," the work went on the merrier to the authorities for a brief time, though it might be all to prove in vain.

One of the worst evils of the time was the stoppage of nearly every means of com-

munication, in any open spirit, among the people. The markets, where farmers were wont to gather large crops of information, had every year been declining in importance for this purpose, as for buying and selling. The parish churches, where the Presbyterians, notwithstanding the strictness of their creed, did not scruple to talk politics, to hear of doings at the Court, and discuss local grievances of cess and insufficient protection of life and property, were now almost wholly deserted. Even the conventicles, some time after they had been prohibited, and had to be held with some degree of secrecy, were useful centres of intelligence on public affairs, where, if many a hot word was heard, many a wise and considerate one could also be uttered. But as the drum-head rule extended, conventicles became less possible, and were often as thinly attended as the religious services of the

curates. The chapmen and pedlars, who had carried much information with their wares from one distant homestead to another, had been swept away, save a few specially licensed by the Sheriff's deputes, and who were simply spies of the reigning power. It was to the people in general like walking in a dense fog. They could see nothing before them, and in groping about could neither recognize the hand of a friend nor be warned of the approach of an enemy. A scene of unutterable confusion, suspicion, and terror, in which one-third of the people were flying or skulking from "justice," and the other two-thirds did not know where justice was to be found or what it had come to mean. For the fugitives there was the short sea passage into Ireland, but it was so closely guarded as to have become almost impassable. They had to escape, therefore, either into Carrick or Dumfriesshire, where

they were sure to fall among the same reefs as at home. In this extremity the proscribed chiefly nestled among the upper glens and corries of the range of mountain country between Galloway and Ayrshire, the Caldon woods and rugged moorland above Glenvernoch, and along the sources of the Cree—the head of Glenluce on one side, and of Glenken on the other—a wildly removed tract of hill country, as one may see, but not so far remote in travel to those who knew the passes, lighted up at every few miles by mountain lakes, which, grim and dreary as they may appear even in sunlight, gleamed like lamps in that night of persecution. Thither they fled, and gathered and re-gathered in those desolate regions, either to break like a thunderstorm on the head of Clavers, or, what was more probable in the circumstances, to pass away like a misty cloud on the hills, to

which they so fondly and desperately clung.

The public jails and the dungeons of the private castles in occupation of the dragoons were filled to overflowing—had been so overfilled for months. Many prisoners, against whom there was no provable charge, had been lying for half a year in thieves'-holes without trial or sentence. Clavers himself was disgusted with the result, and probably had a humaner view of the subject. "Why not execute at once?" he may have said, in his frequent objurgations to his milder brother David—"why this needless crowding of rebels in misery to no purpose?" But David, however willing, could not well help himself, for more prisoners were coming in daily. The process, in short, could go no further. There must be a great jail or other deliverance.

This was the state of affairs which brought

down the Royal Commission from Edinburgh to Wigtown in October of 1684, whose proceedings, after this retrospect, must fall into the thread of our narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

Soldiers are perfect devils in their way;
When once they're raised, they're cursed hard to lay.
Gay.

Yet not more hard than conscience when pure,
And in the right, lifts a majestic front,
Like brow of Jove, to "grossly meddling priests,"
E'en when back'd by soldiers and their captains.
Reformer.

Though Glenvernoch's conversation in the family, on the evening of the visit of the Bailie and the Drover, made plain enough that he was not too well pleased with the errand of these personages, yet it left no sad impression in the circle. There is so much to do about a farm-house in the even-

ings. The farmer himself had to see everything outside put under "thack and rape," as he said, and his good-wife had nearly as much to do indoors, and had always a pleasant smile and a cheerful heart when she saw the inmates all happy and at home.

Martha, deeply troubled as she was, recovered a portion of her native spirit, and had some stories to tell about the Bailie and Tam Picardy, which brought out her tinkling laugh and carried Margaret much along the same pleasant path of innocent gaiety of disposition.

The two young women had gone out after "the worship" for a short walk in the open air. It was a clear, starry autumnal night when the profound stillness of a hill-farm gives piquancy to the impressions of nature.

"Ah!" said Martha, "hoo often hae I looked at this sicht! The stars are aye

the same. The world does not much change, Margaret, hooever much we poor mortals may change."

But the deep calm seemed to move Margaret more than even the steady orbs of the sky.

"It is beautiful," she said, as she clung to Martha. "But hoo quate it is! Nae ruffle o' a wing, nae breath even is heard. The stars twinkle, but they give nae soun'. Oh! dear Martha," said the half-trembling maiden, as if frightened by her own imagination, and clinging more closely to her more robust companion, "isn't it like as if something were aboot to happen —as if some great voice, for weal or woe, were about to speak?"

"Fie on ye, Margaret!" said Martha; "we needna dreed sae much ill, but rather take the calm of nature, when it comes, in its own spirit."

And the two retired for the night with quiet though somewhat weird composure.

Martha, though as troubled as any damsel could be, had the happy faculty of taking comfort from whatever was passingly bright around her; but Margaret, though fully as brave, had a finer ear for the spiritual world.

The farm of Glenvernoch, however, was peculiarly liable at this juncture to what Martha had called "disturbance;" and next afternoon, when dinner was over, and the farmer was still at table, listening to the talk of the women and sipping his home-brewed, both of which comforts, amid his worldly eagerness and anxiety, seemed to give equal satisfaction, and to lend a mutual support to each other, the callant came full speed into the kitchen, and, taking off his bonnet, addressed himself to the upper part.

"There are twa riders coming up the heugh, wi' attendance," said this outlook, "and ane o' them has a shovel-hat."

"Shovel-hat!" said the farmer, "what d'ye mean, carle?"

"Weel, maister, it's as like a shovel or a peat-spade as onything else, and mair as black. The ither ane's a' in scarlet and ribbon, and his headpiece glinting in the sun like siller."

"That's a' richt, boy," said Glenvernoch. "Gang awa' and watch them, and, mind ye, dinna let the coos get in amang the ait sheaves."

Glenvernoch, rising from the table, said, loud enough to be heard, "It's only Mr. Colquhoun, the curate o' the parish, oot on a gallant o' his ain pleasure, but consoolting the religious interests o' the parish a' the time, nae doot." And as he stepped to the window the farmer muttered, in a

lower tone, "It canna be the Bishop shurely, and if only the curate, why should he be wi' a captain o' dragoons?"

"Na, na, gudeman," said Mrs. Wilson, who had been following closely the movements of her husband, "it's only a mair testing business. Dinna put yoursel' aboot, gudeman."

Martha, who had been rubbing her hands in suppressed anguish since the appearance of the callant, rose with a grieved look, and, addressing the farmer, said, "Oh! Glen, I'm the cause o' a' this trouble. Let me gang awa'—let me flee anywhere!"

"Flee!" said Glenvernoch, now pressed by both wife and guest on both hands. "What the warl' wud ye flee for? As for thee, gudewife, I'll speak to thee again; but lady Martha, ye are no o' this hoosehold. Therefore, we haena to produce ye. And so ye'll better gang awa', my fair

young woman, to your ain room; and, Margaret, ye'll as weel gang wi' her, for there has been mair trouble atween you and the curate than onybody else in Glenvernoch."

"No," said Margaret, "no, please, faither, I'm o' this hoosehold, and I'll bear the brunt o' what may come to me as ane o' its number. But Mistress Martha needna expose hersel' withoot ony cause. Come awa', Martha; come awa'!"

And Martha, withdrawing from the father, followed his daughter to the upper room.

By the time Glenvernoch had walked down to the gate the party rode up, attended by two orderlies.

The clerical person proved to be the curate of Penninghame, who saluted the farmer in a very friendly tone.

"I hope I find you well to-day, Glenvernoch, and a' the family. This is Captain Strachan, who has come from Wigtown,

having a charge over the guard at Castle-Stewart, and I hae accompanied him up this far. Captain Strachan, I am happy to introduce you to Mr. Wilson, one of my best parishioners."

"I'm glad to see you baith, gentlemen," said Glenvernoch. "Ye'll be wishing to come into the hoose, I daresay?"

The Captain and the Curate dismounted, and, leaving the horses with the orderlies, proceeded with the farmer up the scarped road to the farm-house.

The visitors were conducted into the best parlour, where Mrs. Wilson had already seated herself in calm expectancy of what she did not doubt to be a visitation of the law, both military and ecclesiastic. The self-possessed little woman, tidily dressed, with keen black eyes gleaming under hair once of the same raven colour, but now in a few years touched with grey, and fea-

tures of such innocence and sweetness as might have driven suspicion of treason or sedition from the imagination even of Dionysius, had covered the table with various refreshments, in the middle of which was a magnum bottle of rarely-produced usquebaugh, and a stoup of water newly brought in from the well.

"Sit doon, gentlemen," said Glenvernoch, after the introduction to his wife. "Sit ye doon."

"Na, they'll no sit doon, Glen, without takin' a cup in their han'. What'll ye hae, Mr. Cahoon, and you, Captain? Ye hae had a lang ride."

The two gentlemen, on looking over the table, were much of the same mind, having lunched heartily at Castle-Stewart, that a little of the usquebaugh would be most agreeable, in serving which Mrs. Wilson proffered an addition of some of the spring

water "new from the well," of which the Curate took a little into his quaigh, while the Captain refused to have any dilution.

After some far-off remarks on the general state of public affairs, in which Strachan took an immediate lead, he at length said, "Ye'll hae heard, Glenvernoch, o' the Royal Commission that has come doon to Wigtown?"

"News dinna travel fast in thae times," said the farmer. "The country is closing up sae. But I hae heard o' sic a thing, Captain. What's wrang doon the coonty?"

"Oh, there is nothing wrang in the Machars," replied Captain Strachan. "A' is under strict curb and rein there. It's in these upper pairts the danger is, and a' lawlessness must noo be crushed in its last nest. That's the opinion o' the Royal Commission, and the order is that the laws must be much mair strictly and severely enforced. As a

loyal subject in the coonty, it is but richt ye should ken what the law is, and what a' loyal subjects are required to do."

Captain Strachan was a soldierly man of about middle age. His red moustache was waved off in cavalier style, and he had a person which did not ill become the gay uniform of the Royal Dragoon Guards. But his cheeks were rather puffy, his eyes somewhat bloodshot, and his steel-bright helmet clasped round his chin did not relieve the fiery aspect of his features. His nose being almost purple, and his coat a bright scarlet, he was altogether arrayed in too violently contrasted colours for ordinary life; and as he sat in the farm-house parlour, with a cup of usquebaugh in one hand, and in the palm of the other the hilt of his sword, which he shook and rattled on the floor when he said anything emphatic, he became every moment more excited and ferocious

in aspect. Indeed, Glenvernoch's impression was that in the last utterances as to the rigorous enforcement of the laws, the captain was about to choke.

"Dear me, Captain, what a forget!" said the farmer. "You sitting there a' this time wi' your helmet on! Gudewife, I wunner ye had nae mair mense. Let me tak' your casque aff, Captain," suiting the action to the word; "and noo let me hear a'oot on the laws. There's naething I like to hear mair aboot than the laws o' the country. It's almost as refreshing as your fine leeturgie, Mr. Cahoon, which, tho' nae sae aften maybe as I should, I sometimes hae the happiness o' sitting under."

The Captain, not well sure what to think of the officious attentions of the farmer—whether they proceeded from a homely kindness of manner or from a covert despite of his cloth—was about to say something in

support of his military rank, when Glenvernoch, who, in addressing his last words to the Curate, had turned round, and lifted the gardevin, added, "I see, Captain, ye're just gaun to speak. But afore ye begin let me help you to a little mair speerit. It's nae Eerish mixture—a'most as safe as maut, though strong awee. But ye can mix it wi' water tae yer liking."

"Stop! that will do," said the Captain. "Thank ye, goodman, that's enough. Stop, stop!"

"And noo, Captain, aboot the laws," said Glenvernoch, as he resumed his seat.

"Well, as I was saying, Mr. Wilson, the laws are to be enforced with mair honest rigour than for some time past, and they hae received under the highest authority some new application in order to make short wark wi' a lawless and obdurate portion of the population. The country canna be kept

in this hotbed year after year without end. And in the first place, Mr. Wilson, ye'll hae heard, or if no, it's my commissioned duty to inform you, that a' rebels' houses are to be burned doon, and every heritor and every farmer o' substance like yoursel are peremptorily required to burn them doon, and see them burned doon."

"Gude guide us!" said Glenvernoch, with more real anxiety than he had hitherto felt. "That is a law! It pits me in a daiver as to the meaning or the use o't. If we begin to burn ane anither's hooses there'll be an unco lowe. But I am no likely to understan', Captain, until I hear hoo ye defeen a rebel. What is he?"

"That's plain enough," said the Captain. "A rebel—"

"For, begging your pardon, Captain," continued the farmer, "it wad be little gude to burn oot a herd who had gane, or was

sooposed to hae gane, ance, or twice, or even three times, to a prayer-meeting aboot the Caldons. I wad only be impoverishing mysel'; and the laird being awa', and probably turning oot a rebel like ithers, I wad no only hae little chance o' remeid, but might be held boond to gang and set fire to the Castle, a still waur complication. But a' this being dune according to law—"

"Redeeculous!" exclaimed the Captain, for the first time leaving the hilt of his sword, and throwing himself back in his chair, unable to resist the humour of the picture rising in the farmer's mind. "Ha! ha! redeeculous! utterly redeeculous!"

"Hoo lang, then," went on the principal speaker, without stopping, "wad the thack roof o' Glenvernoch be safe frae the bleezes? I dinna like fire-raising—ye may smile, Captain, and there's nae doot a bit joke in what I'm saying—but I dinna like fire-raising

on ony pretence. I dinna like it e'en according to law."

"Ye're talking nonsense, Glenvernoch, utter nonsense!" said Captain Strachan, leaning forward and grasping his sword again. "Rebels, my goodman, are ootlaws, ooterly proscrived and excommunicate persons"—looking over to the Curate, who gave an acquiescent nod to the Captain and the farmer, and immediately returned his bland eyes to the farmer's wife, who had been sitting calmly, but not without deep interest in this colloquy—"persons whose names, I may say, have been on the church wa's for months, some even for years, who have absconded frae justice, and yet haunt the districts whence they hae absconded, stirring up cursed strife and rebellion. Thae are the only rebels, Mr. Wilson, the hoose-burning decree compreeses; but, of coorse, by a natural consequence o' the law,

persons who knowingly harbour and sympathizingly visit sic rebels, are as bad as the ithers, and deserve the same fate, though mair proof in their case is required before their hooses are to be burnt. As for the conventiclers, we deal wi' them under a different clause. They will be sent doon to Wigtown, and by sentence o' coort be either banished to the plantations or sent into Edinburgh, and be hanged in the Grassmarket. There's nae question o' burning hooses in their case. It's a mere matter o' regular process of law. And this brings me, Mr. Wilson, to a point on which we have more need to dwell. If ye understan' the hoose-burning decree, I should like to pass on. Do ye understand it?"

"It's a new revelation to me, Captain Strachan," said Glenvernoch, "and it's very entertaining so far as it has gane. But it's difficult to say what ane understan's fully.

Yet ae thing I am sure o', there are nae rebels, as ye hae defeened, on the farm of Glenvernoch; and the maist business-like way will be to send me a list what hooses ye think shood be burnt doon, and I'll then send ye a perfittly ceevil answer and tell ye whether I'll burn them doon or no."

The military officer, not without an uncomfortable feeling that the first point of the new law had been brought adroitly by the farmer to a much too civil footing, yet unwilling to waste time or temper prematurely on a conflagration in which, when it came, the farmer's views on the subject would be of little practical consequence, proceeded to the more immediately important part of his instructions. It was enough to Captain Strachan to see that Glenvernoch was not unimpressed by what had been said as to the edict of burning.

"In the second place, Mr. Wilson," the

Captain resumed, "a new turn has been given in a peacefu' direction to the test, that safeguard o' loyalty and richt living to a' gude subjects. Nearly all of any consequence in the coonty have taken the test, but many do nae mair than sign the paper; and in the wisdom of the High Council it has been decided that this neegative business must be stopped, and the test take a mair positive and complying effect. They must not only sign a paper of allegiance and abjuration o' conventicles and a' that commonplace sort of thing, but they must attend regularly the services o' the appointed ministers, and back up the authorities on a' occasions. There's nae charge against you, Glenvernoch; ye're marked doon as one o' the loyal men o' the country, tho' as the head of a family, ye hae responsible duties over ithers. But as this trenches on the speeritual, I, a captain of the Royal Guards

am nae authority in mysel'. The duty of a soldier is to enforce the law. He has nothing to do with the persuasions and entreaties, and prayers and graces, with which bishops and other ministers at the altar seek to bring a' the lambs o' the flock into the fold. And, therefore, it is I asked Mr. Colquhoun, who has a very gude word of you, Glenvernoch, and a particular respec' for your family, to accompany me on this freenly errand."

"I'm sure," said the mistress of Glenvernoch, who saw marks of strange emotion in her husband's countenance, and feared some indiscretion on his part, "I am glad to see Mr. Cahoon at ony time. He'll be aye welcome in this house, and though we may not be able to agree wi' him in a' things, yet he'll be sure o' a Christian greeting."

Glenvernoch, who, to have scanned him closely at this moment, really looked as if

he would have wrested the sword from the Captain with much less ceremony than he had relieved him of his helmet, was somewhat softened by the words of his wife; and the impulse of the moment, ready to dash on a rock, glided round it in a calmer direction.

"We're fully aught miles here, ye ken, gentlemen, frae the parish kirk, and it's no easy to contrac' for a regular attendance in a' states o' the wather and the roads. I gang sometimes, and am weel enoo' satisfied wi' the service. I see nae great faut in't. And I wad maybe gang aftener if there was onybody there. But it's saxteen miles travel for naething but the service, whilk is a consideration. Lucky Heron tells me that 'cept for troopers and messagers frae Wigtoon, gey aften without ready money, she might gae up the business. She says there's neither kirk nor market.

Hooever, if mair attendance on my pairt will please, ye may calcoolate on me as ye hae calcoolated hitherto."

The Captain, who had now laid down his cup of usquebaugh, dropped the handle of his sword, and, taking out his note-book, said, "I may mark doon what ye say, Glenvernoch?"

"O ay! tak' it a' doon, sir, surely," said the farmer. "It may dae you some gude, and can dae me nae harm; I'll sign it if ye like."

The Curate, not unpleased with the progress of affairs, addressed himself with some unction to Mrs. Wilson, to whom he had been observing a gracious demeanour throughout. "He was sorry she had never attended the service. But the state of her health was no doubt a cause. But how glad he would be to see her at the service! Would she not come with her husband occa-

sionally? Why not sign what he signed? It would not be required of her to the letter?"

To all these tender approaches the goodwife of Glenvernoch had but one answer. "I gang wi' my goodman," she said, "in what he does in thae public matters. But I decline to come under any personal obligation of attendance, here or there. I hae plenty to do in my ain place. Besides, we are a family, and like a' families, we are no a' of ae mind exac'ly; and while following my goodman I mauna lose haud o' my bairns. I need to hae some poo'r, Mr. Cahoon, of moderation in my ain hoose."

The Captain, who had already, by a rattle of the point of his scabbard on the floor, disturbed this conversation between the Curate and the matron of Glenvernoch, said, with some anger,—

"Ye had better reconsider, Mrs. Wilson.

These are serious times ; and when the dam strays, there is little hope for the younger o' the flock. I'll note ye down to reconsider."

" I hae nae ither answer to gi'e, Captain, than I ha'e gi'en," replied the little woman with meek composure, but with resolute firmness.

" You have only one son, Glenvernoch," said the Captain, looking over his paper.

" Only ae son," said the farmer, " Tammas, he's ca'd ; and if ye can get Tammas to gang to the kirk, I'm sure ye'll dae mair than I hae been able. Though Tammas is no a bad lad—a vera gude son to me so far as he has gane—does what I bid him in the wark, and saves me mickle fash. Indeed, there is noo sae much waste o' time in public things, I couldna dae weel without him on the farm at a'. He's a gude lad, Tammas —very fond o' his sisters, and, indeed, o' a' young lasses. If ye can get a troop o' them,

Captain, to gang to the service, Tammas will no be an absenter, I'se warrant ye."

"Is he here?" asked Captain Strachan, in a severe court-martial tone.

"Here, bless you, no! He's miles awa' looking aifter stock—awa' before daylicht, and no be back till supper-time."

"Your eldest, Mr. Wilson, is a daughter —Margaret, I see her name," proceeded Captain Strachan.

Margaret, since the roll had begun to be called, had come into the room and taken a seat beside her mother.

"Ay," replied the farmer, "that's Margaret, bonnie woman, sitting aside the gudewife."

The Captain cast an eager glance at the eldest of Glenvernoch, and for a few moments seemed surprised, and softened, if not awed, by her appearance.

Her face was turned towards her mother,

her head slightly bent, her eyes drooping towards the maternal bosom. A white kerchief, tied simply round her neck, covered her shoulders, and over it lay her long light-auburn hair, bound by a single fillet of dark-blue ribbon. She seemed a picture both of modesty and reverence.

"My faith, Margaret!" said the Captain, "ye're a young ane, and as pretty and innocent-looking as ye are young."

Margaret's head drooped a little more, and she grasped her mother's hand.

"But speak to me, and look to me, Margaret," continued the military inquisitor, in a louder tone. "Hoo is it that sae young, sae pretty, and sae innocent-looking, ye should be a breaker o' the laws?"

Margaret turned her face to the Captain, and with a glance that smote his temper of authority to the quick, said, "I dinna ken, sir, what laws o' man I hae broken that are

worth the name o' laws. I'm no a law-breaker; I do hairm to you or nae ane; and ye're no to come into my faither's hoose and speak to me in sic rude ways."

"Silence, lass!" cried the Captain. "Do you know that you are on the list of the suspect, and that I could carry you along with me to jail this minute?"

Glenvernoch here sprang to his feet as if he meant to lay hands on the Captain, when the Curate rose, and, placing himself in front of the farmer, said, "Stop! stop! Captain Strachan. Margaret's a sensitive young woman, and this is probably mair in my line o' duty than yours. Tender consciences require to be tenderly dealt with."

And the Curate drew his chair nearer to Margaret.

"Your father, Margaret," began the Curate, "comes to the service, and your mother, I will hope, from her compliance

with the head of the family, will come some day when the weather is fine. Why not you, Margaret, attend too, and give a good and devout example in such distracted times ?"

"Mr. Cahoon," said Margaret, with courtesy, but not without a shade of aversion on her features, and that peculiar expression of her eyes as they rose and drooped, and when speaking out always rose again as if looking from a loftier impulse, which was apt to be extremely cognizant and annoying to a lower-minded interlocutor—"I ha'e nae objection to ye as a gentleman, or even as a minister o' grace; but ye hae'na come as pastor in the appointed way, pitting out by force whae had a better richt; and this, apairt from a' ither differences, is a transgression o' the divine law, which, speaking for mesell alane, I canna coontenance."

"Well, Margaret," urged the Curate, "there is no doubt a difference among us about institution to the pastoral office. We are at present in an interreegnum, and in this interreegnum by the will o' the Government, by the public law of the country, and by its officers, military and civil, who are commanded in the Bible, as ye may read, to be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the Church, I am minister of Penninghame. That may be wrong. Some fitter man might be, or should be, in the place. But the ordinance of divine public worship itself should be respected in all circumstances."

"Admitting," replied Margaret; "but ye should ken, Mr. Cahoon, what the Master o' Assemblies has said, that the Father is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and that He's no confined to ony place."

"Ye are joining yourself to rebels, Margaret, under what, I would fain hope, may be a sincere though a mistaken motive on your part—but think what you are doing!—you are flying in the face of the king himself, whom you are commanded in the Scriptures to honour."

"I'm joined to nae rebels," replied this indomitable catechumen; "and as for the king I hae nae malice to him whatever. But ye mauna bring the king, Mr. Cahoon, atween me and the King o' kings in matters where the King o' kings and my ain conscience alane are anywise concerned. It's no honest to dae sic a thing."

The Curate, finding himself as much nonplussed at this point as the military inquisitor had been at the other, drew back his chair: and the Captain laughed so loudly and derisively in the face of the Curate, that Margaret rose from her seat

as if she had been struck by a galvanic battery.

"The surplice and the red-coat are a' ane to your dochter, Glen, ha! ha!" said the Captain, still laughing; "but we'll have another taste of your usquebaugh, man, and then we'll travil," in the course of which observation Margaret had turned to leave the room, and her mother had risen to her feet in much trepidation of heart.

"But haud, Margaret, haud awee!" cried the Captain. "Ye hae geeven us nae direct answer, young woman. Hoo are ye to be returned—good, bad, or doubtful—or, in ither words, do ye gang wi' your faither, or do ye gang wi' me to the jail?"

"I'm no frichtened for your jails or ony o' your violence," said Margaret, confronting her inquisitor with the same modest but unconquerable glance. "I thocht it

becoming," she added, "since you and Mr. Cahoon were here, to appear afore ye, and I hae gi'en ye the only answer I can gi'e ye, noo or again." And upon these words Margaret passed out of the inner door of the parlour as calmly as she had entered it.

"Ye'll no tak'—that wean o' mine—Captain "—said Glenvernoch, with a stricture of utterance, the result of an outward restraint of fervent inward passion, the marks of which might have been seen in all the features of his face and muscles of his body—"or e'en touch a hair o' her head—no ae hair—save ow'r my vera heart's bluid. I maun let ye—understan'—Captain—hoo it stauns atween us—there maun be nae violence to my lassie—or by the—"

"Whish, whish! dinna sweer, Glenvernoch," said Captain Strachan. "Ye're a

loyal and a religious man, but ye are under the no uncommon misfortune of being in the seat o' war just noo, and maun submit patiently to the safe guidance o' your hoosehold, and a strict control o' public affairs round aboot ye."

It was with some difficulty, notwithstanding the intention of the Captain to bring the interview to as pleasant ending as the circumstances would admit, that the company could now adjust themselves to any further converse. The Curate sat moody and silent, with a countenance as sour as that of any of the Covenanters whom he was in the daily habit of denouncing. The goodwife was willing enough to help the Captain to some more of the usquebaugh, but her habitually quiet and gentle manner expressed more inward disquietude than any outward welcome; while the farmer stood or moved

about the room, as if impatient for the departure of his visitors.

"Sit doon, Glenvernoch, though it were only to tak' a parting sip o' your ain liquor in mutual friendship," said Captain Strachan, after having looked over his order-book, on which he had made a final jotting, and while in the act of returning it to his breast pocket, "there is only one thing more I have to speak about."

The farmer moving to the table for what he thought could not be refused in common civility, the Captain continued to say, "The case o' Martha Dunbar. That young woman is believed to be still hiding somewhere in the upper pairts o' Gallowa', and to be doing much mischief to the public peace, of which she, like other silly women, may hae little notion o', but whilk cannot be tolerated by responsibles for the public safety."

"Martha Dunbar!" said the farmer, as he drew to a seat beside the Captain. "That's the second dochter o' Sir David? I thocht Clavers had made peace wi' Baldoon, assuring him o' the protection o' the Government, and that the young lady was only to absent hersel' frae the Castle, and no to be seen anywhere about Wigtown or the parish o' Kirkinner."

"That's true in a sense," replied Captain Strachan, with a rising cough or hiccup, which he somewhat overcame by pressing his hand on his mouth. "But it was a year or twa bypast that"—another difficulty in the throat, which the Captain gallantly repressed—"and it's a part o' the new law, Glen, that the women sent oot the country are now enacted to be brought back again, and to live in their ain hooseholds like decent women, whether wives or daughters, or,

what's the same thing, their husbands or fathers to be under heavy bonds to surrender them at any date when necessary to law and justice."

"It seems a hard case, Captain," said Glenvernoch; "for if they are no to be allooed to leeve oot o' the country, and no to be allooed to leeve in the country, whar' are the puir craturs to be allooed to leeve ava?"

"It is nae doubt a kind o' poozle, Glen, in the airt o' government, but happily it is no insurmoontable. It's a' in a nitshell. There are a score or twa o' women in Gallowa' who gie mair trouble than a' the muster-roll o' males above seventeen. It is a mere ootblaw of female lunacy. The limmers must be brought under strict control"—signs of stoppage in the thorax again—"by the stronger sex. D—n them, they must be—" What the final

fate of the lunatic women should be was not expressed in words, the Captain sneezing more violently at this point than he had sneezed before.

"Tak' oot your uisky, Captain," said Glenvernoch. "'Twill help to break your koch."

"And wharaboots," resumed the farmer, "is Lady Martha supposed to be?"

"That is what we are no entirely sure o'," said Captain Strachan. "She is somewhere about the head of Glenken. The rebels are gatherin' there, trusting to the support of Kenmure. But that cover will sune be in a blaze."

And the Captain, rising suddenly at the thought of Glenken as out of a dream, and putting on his helmet, said rapidly to Glenvernoch, "Ye'll have many fugitives here. Be on your guard. If Martha Dunbar should be one, detain her, and send her

home to her father at Baldoon under safe escort, which ye have on order from the garrison at Castle Stewart." Then, with still more sudden word and gesture of compliment to the goodwife of Glenvernoch, he took his departure, followed by the Curate in a mechanical haste—like the needle following the magnet.

CHAPTER VIII.

Search deep my heart! bring with thee awful
conscience
And firm resolve! that, in the approaching hour
Of blood and horror, I may stand unmoved;
Nor fear to strike where Justice calls, nor dare
To strike where she forbids! Why bear I, then,
This dark, insidious dagger?—'Tis the badge
Of vile assassins.—Detested thought!
Yet—as foul lust and murder, though on thrones
Triumphant, still retain their hell-born quality;
So Justice, groaning beneath countless wrongs,
Quits not her spotless and celestial nature;
But, in the unhallow'd murderer's disguise,
Can sanctify this steel.

Selim's Soliloquy in "Barbarossa."

WHILE the events recorded in the previous chapter were occurring at Glenvernoch the Royal Commission had opened its first

public Court in Wigtown, with an *éclat* of high power which had seldom, if ever before, visited the quiet burgh.

The first two or three days after their arrival the Commissioners had held private sittings, to which seldom more than one confidant was admitted at a time. The Sheriff-Depute and the Laird of Lagg—the latter of whom, though a gentleman of Dumfriesshire, had, in consideration of his great zeal, been conjoined with Claverhouse in the Sheriff-Deputeship before the Hereditary Sheriff was finally superseded—were in constant attendance. They had been very busy for some months in all parts of the province, and had divided the work between them with an appearance of system. Lagg, who was a hard swearer himself, chiefly administered oaths, not only to those who were summoned or carried by force to his Courts, but to most of any

mark whom he met casually on the roads. The oath of allegiance, and the oath of abjuration, and other State oaths, had long since become matters of course to Lagg, and had now, indeed, become much a matter of form to the majority of the population. But the oath which Lagg pressed with most vehemence on his abjurers was to tell him, on pain of every conceivable present and future judgment, where certain others, who were neither to be seen in his rides nor to be "compeared" in his courts, were to be found. On the heads of some of these there was a price; and of the rest it was certain that when found they would not swallow at his hands even the oath of allegiance, and that their whole estate, farm or barony, would fall an easy prey into the hands of the spoiler. The acting Sheriff, on the other hand, addressed himself chiefly to the

ecclesiastical side of affairs. The question he chiefly pressed on the persons summoned before him was whether "they kept the Church," and as only indifferent answers could be given on solemn oath to this question, he imposed fines of more or less magnitude, and hurried on like a man of undisputed legal authority, conscious that, while thus diligently adding to the treasury of the Sheriffdom, he had a general superintendence, and could not waste much time in mere matters of finance.

But Queensberry, who had come down to look into this complicated state of affairs with the eye of a Prime Minister, would not admit of any general concerted statement of Clavers and his deputies, but would have one at a time. The usually rapid and absolute decisions of Claverhouse were thus somewhat checked; but the

check was one that admitted of some remedy. The Provost, Coltran, also member for the burgh, had an audience; and the Bailie, of our acquaintance, was honoured with an audience, though he would much rather have appeared as a simple attendant, or "I say with you" of the Provost, and was in no little agitation of self-consciousness at having to speak face to face with the Lord Treasurer.

"What have you to state, Bailie?" asked Queensberry, when the civic magistrate had made all the obeisances he could think of as proper to the occasion.

"State, my Lord, or your high Lordship?" said the Bailie, in temporary confusion of mind, or craftily fishing about in much humility of spirit for some guidance how to proceed. "Is it State, may it please your Grace, I hae to speak o'? For a mere burgh magistrate like me can ken

little o' high affairs; but as regairds things o' the sherradom, I can say for my ain part I hae been diligent nicht and day in my ain place, and maun express the great joy which this veesitation has given a' in authority hereaboots. E'en though I maun compleen and demur, and indeed aften grieve in my heart, mair in private than in public, whar' ane must aye wear a strang face becoming a magistrate, that there is still much slackness, twa-facedness, and fause-heartedness amang us, yet I hae nae doot your Royal Highness will pit the hood-sheaf on what has sae far been a weel-biggit stook."

And so the Bailie, in reply to the interrogatories of Queensberry, proceeded to give details of what he deemed most amiss, in the course of which he did not fail to allude to what he had seen and reprimanded only the other day at Glenvernoch

on a visit of what he called "the maist ordinar' and freenly business," describing the secrecy, suspicion, and contempt of any one in office which surrounded the family, and the masterliness of the farmer himself, much more intent on driving hard bargains than serving either king or country, or honouring any one in the loyal service, even though a magistrate of Wigtown. The Bailie warmed so much on this latest grievance that he did not hesitate to say that Glenvernoch was a double-minded hypocrite, and that the farm, he much feared, would be found ere long to be "a nest of ooter rebellion."

"That will do, Bailie," said Queensberry.

"Weel, may it please your Lord High Grace," added the Bailie, "I wad observe farther—for acquantance o' the country is o' some consideration in sic times—if your

Royal Highness would alloo me to observe, that is to say, shouldna Glenvernoch be weel watched? The garrison at Castle-Stewart wullna only be of nae use, but may be overpoored ony morning, and a' that has been dune in that important pairt o' the country be waur than lost to the cause."

A glance from Clavers, teeming with approval, and caught by the Bailie, was ample assurance to this magisterial busy-body that he had acquitted himself not so badly of a great public duty.

The preliminary private sittings of the Royal Commission did not close without a pretty unanimous agreement among the three—Queensberry, Drumlanrig, and Claverhouse—as to what was to be immediately done in the daily and hourly discharge of the Sheriff's office. It had been swiftly concluded to apprehend and

bring in any at hand that were obnoxious to the ruling power, and that could be of any avail even as witnesses in the pending trials. It was this resolution, already acted upon to a large extent, which led to the sudden arrest of the old lady of Arioland, and threw her into the same prison cell with three other women, against whom there was no offence to be alleged save that of occasional kindliness to sons or husbands outlawed for being at Bothwell Brig, or participating anywise in one or other of the many resistances of the time. As for the rest, the Royal Commissioners were of one mind that the low country should be further disarmed, and this done by such rapid means as could be contrived, the dragoons and other military, so far assured that there could be little danger in their rear, should advance up the three glens—Luce, Cree, and Ken—and, by a

series of well-concerted movements, sweep away from the upper and mountainous parts of the province, where Sheriff's edicts, the hoofs of his horse, or the rattle of his carbines had not yet penetrated, the last vestiges of civil and religious liberty in Galloway.

But the more public duty of the jail delivery remained.

This was opened with much state. The Commissioners, on issuing from the Sheriff's residence—forming a part of the Court Room, Tolbooth, and other public buildings—mounted steeds, richly caparisoned, and passed easily into their places in a procession which had been already formed, and was drawn up along the lower end of the square, to which the mass of masonry referred to, surmounted by a tower of some height, on which floated the Royal Standard of Scotland,

gave an imposing appearance. At the head of the procession rode two trumpeters, and a few files of dragoons. Next came the Provost on foot, with the Bailie in one arm and the town-clerk in the other, preceded by the Provost's serving-man in livery, and followed by the town-sergeant, town-drummer, head-jailer, and a considerable squad of sheriff-officers, one of of whom had the honour of being also hangman of the burgh and the lower part of the county. Here a wide space was left for the Commissioners, and on caracoling into their places, their six grooms—three of whom attended on Queensberry—ranged themselves in Indian file, three on each side of their masters. The Commissioners were further flanked by as many dragoons with loaded pistols in their hands. After the Commissioners followed Sheriff-Depute Graham and the Laird of

Lagg, mounted, and behind them the Sheriff-Clerk, on horseback. Then a company of the Merse Militia, who had been brought across the Cree from Monygove, where the regiment had for some time had its head-quarters, to swell this occasion, and at the head of whom rode the Earl of Home, the colonel of the regiment. A party of dragoons, with trumpets and kettle-drums, closed the rear of the procession, under Major Winram, the second in military command to Claverhouse in his sheriffdom.

When the trumpets sounded and the procession began to move, Claverhouse and Drumlanrig drew their swords, while Queensberry placed to his breast the end of a baton of office he held in his hand, and on the top of which was a little gold crown.

Twice this brilliant pageant rode and

marched in slow and measured pace round the large open centre of Wigtown, crowded with spectators. The corporation by a great effort had induced the inhabitants to remove all "fulzie" from before their doors, and had cut down much of the rank grass and weeds which grew over many parts of the little-trodden area of the burgh. A large dung-heap near the centre of the square, belonging to "the common good," was not so easily disposed of, more particularly at that period of the year. It was covered securely, however, with planks of wood, and as this was wholly due to the taste and energy of the Bailie, his particular friends in the burgh, and such distinguished persons from outside as he was inclined to toady, had the privilege of this coign of vantage on the top of "the common good." But the march was lined by people of all ranks, and the burgesses,

and country people who had flocked into the burgh, had an opportunity of seeing some imitation of "a riding of the Parliament" with which the citizens of Edinburgh had long been familiar.

The excitement was universal as the Commissioners entered the Court-House, but it was an excitement in which one could easily observe two widely different currents. Most of the town people and the sight-seers from other places were simply elated by the novelty and unaccustomed grandeur of the spectacle; and if many even of these had doubts as to the justice of what was about to take place, their spirits were buoyed for the moment above all depressing considerations by the martial music, the dignity of the Commissioners, and the general animation of the scene. But a large part of the concourse consisted of people who had come into

Wigtown that day with anything but a show in their hearts. The fate of scores of prisoners was hanging in the balance. Their doom might be banishment to the plantations, or commitment to Edinburgh, which signified in the popular imagination either hanging in the Grassmarket or torture in the inquisition chamber, or both. At the least there might be an utter harrying and dispossession of the prisoner, and the erasure of his dwelling-house by fire. The relatives and friends of the prisoners naturally gathered to the spot where the first news of their doom was to be heard. There were others who had a defying detestation of the whole procedure, and others still who, with the same detestation, were quaking with fear lest some of the prisoners, in their answers to peremptory questions, might name or inculpate them. A hundred anxieties and terrors agitated

this part of the assemblage, and the light-hearted jubilation of the greater number only sickened and terrified them the more.

No sooner had Major Winram posted a cordon of troops round the Tolbooth, and dismissed the surplus force to their quarters, than a commotion arose on the outskirts of the crowd, and rapidly spread through the general mass. A party of horsemen had approached, and cries of "The Sheriff!" "The auld Sheriff and Garthland!" "Open a way for the auld Sheriff!" arose as Sir Andrew Agnew and his son, with M'Dowall of Garthland, Stewart of Tonderghie, and the two sons of Gordon of Craichlaw, attended by a few serving-men, dismounted, and pressed through the crowd towards the Court-House. Their appearance evidently was unexpected to the multitude, and gave rise to various surmises; but these new arrivals

on a scene where they were least looked for, but like shadows passing across a brilliantly-lighted diorama vividly recalled the old familiar authority of the province in happier times, had a cordial welcome from nearly all. "They're gaing to stop the trials," said one; "ye may relee the auld Sherra has a warrant frae the Croon." "Na," said another, "haflins no sae mickle as that—they're no sae armed-looking, but they'll lodge a protest." "Or plead for mercy in the sentences," said a third. "Or mair likely tak' the Test," whispered an uncouth figure, overhearing while passing round this group. "Haud your tongue, sir! Wha's that?" said the first speaker, looking over his shoulder in the direction of the whisper. "Never mind the idiot," said another, as they saw the back of the figure gliding onward through the press. "That's Clavers' favourite fule."

The crowd had not long to wait in this suspense until Winram's trumpeter sounded the attention call, and the Major himself, mounting his charger, read aloud a proclamation of the Royal Commission that Sir Andrew Agnew, Garthland, and the other gentlemen already named, had that day taken the Test; that the whole gentry and heritors within the shire were therefore and thereby declared to have taken the Test, with the exception of two or three; and that all the commons in the shire who had not taken the Test were already prisoners, or would very soon be. After another flourish from the trumpeter, Winram handed the paper to the town-drummer, and told him to go and proclaim it at the Cross, according to use and wont, and as in these cases observed and provided, "Whilk means, Jock," added the Major, as he stooped down from the

saddle, "as lang as there's onybody to listen."

Immediately a courier rode up from the Sheriff's stables, with an escort of four dragoons, and, receiving a despatch, galloped off through the Vennel, on the road to Edinburgh, with the same news.[1]

While there was much scurry outside in these circumstances, nearly one half of the crowd following the town-drummer to the Cross to learn "mair particulars," and the other half, attracted by the courier and his escort, or hovering sadly from other motives round the Tolbooth—the proceedings of the Commission had been proceed-

[1] The intelligence, as announced in the capital, may have been a little different in one respect, for in looking at the terms of the despatch as officially recorded, it runs in the last clause thus:—"We further declare that all the commons in the said shire who had not taken the Test have now done the same, except *six or seven* who are now prisoners."

ing with much despatch, and had only been interrupted a few minutes by the compearance of the ex-Hereditary Sheriff and his friends.

They had come, after long passive resistance, to submit *simpliciter*, and without a word, to the Test, to not a single sentence of which their hearts responded. The edict that rebels' houses were to be burned down was too much for them. They had seen this ferocious law ruthlessly executed in the case of Sara Stewart in Penninghame, and in other humble cases. But they had castles, baronies, and anciently-established legal rights and possessions; and though they could not call these things now their own in reality, yet their castles, for some time under military occupation, could all the more easily be burned down—as easily, indeed, as the humblest cottage in the shire—and they

wished, not unnaturally, to place a margin between them and utter dispossession, and not to be in the list of rebels to be pursued by fire and sword to the last extremity of destruction. And so they came to take the Test. Old Gordon of Craichlaw would not budge. "Let them come and do what they like," he said in a senile but resolute despair; "I know how to die." But his two sons, who had long stood out, were deeply affected by the sudden arrest and impending doom of their aunt of Arioland. They thought that by making obeisance they would establish an interest with the Commission in her favour, and thus they joined Sir Andrew Agnew and Garthland in their humiliating ride to Wigtown.

CHAPTER IX.

Fell tyrants strike beyond the bone,
And wound the soul; bow Genius down,
Lay Virtue waste.

Young.

The rapidity with which the Commissioners disposed of the cases brought before them would have been startling at any period, and must be almost incomprehensible now. The prisoners were brought up one by one; there were no juries to be sworn, no advocates or barristers to plead the cause of the accused; no witnesses called to testify to any matter of fact; no relatives or friends of the accused allowed even to speak or to offer bail. The Sheriff-Clerk

announced briefly from sheets of paper before him the charge against each prisoner; the Sheriff-Depute put a few opening questions, which were sharply reiterated or extended by the Commissioners; and judgment passed swiftly on the replies, which in many cases were briefer than the questions. In one sitting fifty-five cases were thus disposed of, though lights had been burning some hours in the Court-room before the proceedings were terminated.

Some of the cases turned simply upon taking the Test. When the prisoner was willing to swear in common form and content to take the Test, with no other point against him, he was tested on the spot, and liberated. If any were willing to take the Test, but yet had frankly admitted or were known to have had converse with "rebels," they were sent back to their cells,

and the diet against them transferred to the "Lords of Justiciary at Edinburgh" in December. If a prisoner firmly refused to take the Test, he was "committed to irons," which meant an immediate despatch to the inquisition-chamber in the capital, loaded with every sign of obdurate guilt. The most difficult cases were those where the prisoners were accused, not of mere converse only, but what was then called "harbour and reset of rebels—" these being the few remaining persons "outlawed" for Bothwell Bridge, field-preaching or other unpardonable crime. Fourteen of the fifty-five cases were for converse with "Kennedy, minister in Ireland," and a freeholder of land in Galloway, and seven for "harbour or knowledge" of William Hay of Arioland. To be a witness simply of converse, harbour, or knowledge of "rebels" was itself a grave offence, and

two of the prisoners, who confessed to having seen Hay about his mother's house "without arms" some months bygone, were only liberated on taking the Test. A recent capture of prisoners under escort to Edinburgh, at Enterkin, in the upper part of Dumfriesshire, was also dragged into the interrogatories; and John Henderson, who appears to have been a desperate character of the time, for he would neither admit that it was unlawful in all cases to rise against the King, nor say whether it was unlawful to kill a bishop or a curate, or even whether the murder of Archbishop Sharpe was a murder, frankly confessed he was the writer of a produced letter to some one whose name is now undecipherable in the records, but at the same time vowed he knew nothing about the Enterkin affair, or whether the prisoners had been rescued or not. "I wad be very

glad," he added, in a blunt but comical spirit, "if any wad noo rescue me." John, of course, was "committed to the irons," though that honest witticism of his deserved a better fate, the more especially since the Commissioners themselves could not refuse it the only smile that had been seen on their faces during the assize.

The old Lady of Arioland had been brought up early in the day, and had been allowed by the head-jailer to go into his wife's apartment and give some attention to her toilet. She was there in the domestic attire in which she had been dragged to prison. She changed nothing, for she had nothing to change. But she laid aside the heavy mantle and hood of native fur which had been thrown about her, and she dressed her hair, now almost white, more from years of sorrow than from years of age; for her keen black eyes, marked

eyebrows of dark colour, and browned but unwrinkled brow and cheeks, gave assurance of much remaining life and vigour. Round the waist of her gown of serge, tightly fitting, and buttoned only at the neck and shoulders, was the embroidered girdle on which she used to hang her keys, on one side, and the pouch in which she carried all her odds-and-ends on the other. But she unbuttoned the neck of her gown, and, folding it over, displayed the white lace and muslin that lay over her bosom; and making a *coiffure* of a black veil over her white hair, in this guise passed to the judgment-seat.

The Sheriff-Clerk did not look at his sheets of paper, and only said, "Mrs. Hay of Arioland—harbour and reset." The Sheriff-Depute said nothing. Queensberry himself took the examination in hand.

"You have not subscribed the Test, I

believe, my good lady?" said the Lord Treasurer, more as an introduction of his interrogatory than as a question.

"No, nor ever shall," was the brief but proud answer of the Dame.

"Then are we to suppose that you have renounced at once allegiance to the King and obedience to the laws?"

"I make a distinction of the King and the laws," replied the prisoner. "My loyalty stands on a stronger foundation than mumbling oaths and inveigling tests, coming atween a mother and her children in the plainest dictates o' nature, and atween the conscience and the Maker. Look the annals o' your hoose and mine, my Lord Queensberry, and tell me on what side there has been maist loyalty."

"It is not our business, my Lady Hay," said Queensberry, somewhat nettled, "to hear speeches, still less to submit ourselves

to a catechism. We have only to ask you a few questions, to which we expect civil answers."

The lady bowed in assent, but added, "Will ye grace me, my Lords, wi' a chair?" —a privilege which was granted her.

A lengthened interrogatory then followed, to all the leading points of which she made frank confessions. She had received and entertained her son William Hay; and she had had Divine worship and preachings in her house. But to all minor and drawing questions, as to times, &c.—when and how often she had received her son, when she had seen him last, where he had gone to, where he might be now, and the like—she refused to answer, as questions, she maintained, they had no right to ask. And when pressed whether she would do the like in future as in the past, she rose from her chair, and exclaimed passionately,—

"Why not? Am I to be turned into a beagle and bloodhunter of my ain son, whate'er his faults? Show me where I have offended against any neighbour or the public peace, and then sentence me as you please."

The Commissioners, not unagitated by this firm old lady of the soil, looked at each other, and consulted for a few minutes, the result whereof was that Queensberry ordered the prisoner to be removed to the cells in the meanwhile.

It was deemed prudent not to pass sentence on Mrs. Hay until the other "female panels" under a similar charge had been brought up.

The lights were burning dimly in the Court-room in the long hours of night. The crowd in the street had rapidly thinned and passed away after the submission of Sir Andrew Agnew and Garthland,

and the repeated proclamations of the town-drummer at the Cross. Only a small band of anxious stragglers, waiting for the last tidings of doom on friends or relatives, now hovered round the Tolbooth, which was still guarded by a circle of dragoons, some of whom held flambeaus that threw fitful glares of light over the darkness. The Court-room itself was almost deserted, save by the officers of justice and a few who, having the privilege of entry, passed out and in at intervals, when Margaret Gordon, "good-wife of Arioland elder," Margaret Milligan, and Margaret M'Lurg, spouses to "rebels," whom they had harboured, were brought up—the last act of the Court—and sentenced to *banishment to the plantations*. Sara Stewart, the fourth lady under a like charge, being herself a decided conformist, and content to take baptism from Mr. Cahoun, curate

of Penninghame, and to "hold the chylde up herself," had during the day been "inacted"—let out on bail for due performance—her house having been already burned over her head.

The following day was spent by the Commissioners in signing the sentences passed upon the various prisoners, and revising and subscribing "instructions" to heritors, ministers, and the Sheriff and his deputes as to the execution of the new rigours of law, including a searching inquest after all ladies who had left their houses since the last Act of Indemnity, taking bonds from heritors to produce their wives before the Lords of Privy Council on ten days' notice, and stringent commands to the Sheriff-Depute and his colleagues to see the houses of all rebels pulled down. Ladies who had been driven from their homes within the last two or three years

were now to be brought back, with the doom of the Lady of Arioland over them if they should refuse. The women of Galloway were the terror of the Commissioners, now when the barons and most of the principal male inhabitants had been "tested;" and against the women they did not hesitate to wage cruel and unsparing, though ludicrous and unmanly, war.

Queensberry and Drumlanrig, after paying a visit to the Earl of Galloway at Clary, returned to Edinburgh; and Claverhouse remained to carry out the campaign.

CHAPTER X.

With a heart of furious fancies,
Whereof I am commander;
With a burning spear,
And a horse of air,
To the wilderness I wander;
With a night of ghosts and shadows,
I summon'd am to Tourney;
Ten leagues beyond
The wide world's end;
Methinks it is no journey!

Tom-a-Bedlam Song.

Soon after the reveille had beat next morning, a troop of dragoons was mustered before the residence of the Sheriff-Principal, and the clarion notes of the trumpeter, when the roll had been called, roused the echoes of the burg. The troopers were

many of them veteran soldiers who had served in the wars abroad, and all of them had been drafted either from the Royal Scots Dragoons, which from a troop or two had swelled during the persecutions into a large regiment under the command of Sir Thomas Dalziel, or from a body of irregular cavalry known as "Claverhouse's Troopers." But they were mounted on horses levied in Galloway, mostly of dun colour, small in size, but full of mettle, and safe to ride upon in a wild and broken country, a lively sense of all the difficulties of which, whether on hill, moor, or moss, had become an instinct of this native breed. The men wore iron helmets, ribbed over the crown, and fastened round the throat by a chain of steel; small cuirasses, or more like shirt-collars folded down, protected part of the shoulders and the breast; and buff riding coats, with leather gaiters up to the

knee, of nearly the same colour. For arms they had carbines slung behind their backs, a match or cartridge box and powder-horn on the right side of their belts, sabres on the left, and pistols in the holsters of their saddles. A small corps, among whom the farrier was the leading figure, carried axes at their saddle-bows, good for hewing down a rebellious postern or barricaded outer or inner door. Others carried spears, which, as these soldiers sometimes fought on foot, were useful in the left hand when fighting with their swords, both as an additional defence and as javelins that could be thrown at a flying conventicler, swifter of foot than they in their riding gear.

A dark-brown charger, two hands higher than most of the other horses, was led by a groom in front of the troop; and the thin line of burgesses, in which stood the Bailie, who had risen thus early, notwithstanding

the excitement of the previous day, to witness this new spectacle, admired the trappings of the war charger, and wondered what the great bearskin that covered the saddle, and was neatly folded up before and behind, could be.

At length the front door of the residence opened, and Claverhouse appeared on the balustrade of a flight of stairs down to the street, in the dress of a colonel, though for that matter, since military attire was not very nicely regulated at the period, it would have been equally suitable for a Field-Marshal, or the god Mars himself. It was antique in its model, with just so much foppery of the time as could be becomingly engrafted upon it. His steel casque, and steel cuirass, the latter fitting closely over his back, breast, and arms, were of the best workmanship which the armouries of the Continent could produce, and in their

burnished lustre would have been almost too bright under the rays of the sun for mortal eyes. But over the one drooped a white plume, and over the other was a surtout of stout crimson cloth, with an edging of lace ruffle round the collar, covering the breast without wholly concealing the steel cuirass, and more lace ruffle along the borders and round the ends of the slashed sleeves. Over his fingers and wrists were thoroughly horsemanlike gloves of soft buff leather. His doeskin breeches would have been too white even for a fox-hunt, save for a pair of black-leather boots, the upper flaps of which covered full one-half his thighs. He was well armed, not only in helmet and coat of mail, and in his holster-pistols: a keen-edged and brightly hilted sabre hung at his side, curved, though not so much curved as a Turkish scimitar, and under his crimson surtout on

a belt over the fringe of the cuirass hung two small silver-mounted pistols on each side, sure to kill at short distance. His pale but handsome face was rendered still more pale by the dark locks which fell in curls from under his helmet, and the dark and delicately trimmed moustache. One would have said he was a military exquisite got up in the finest fashion. But there was a firmness of expression under the moustache, a sniffing defiance in the slightly tilted tip of the nose, and an audacity of stare in the fierce and dancing eye of Clavers, which could not be reconciled with the idea of a mere cavalier dandy.

The troop, drawing their swords, presented arms as he moved lightly down the stair, and put his foot in the stirrup, when his attention, as he looked towards the head of his horse, was arrested by a wild and ragged figure who had been hovering

about the groom, and was now fondling the head and neck of the charger.

"How now, Peerie!" said Claverhouse, and a colloquy ensued—his foot still in the stirrup and his hand on the saddle—so brief that it may be postponed a moment while the reader looks at the person so familiarly addressed.

Allan Peerie was a tall, thin, but active and long-striding person, of youthful but weather-beaten features, with a high conical black hat of the period without the brim, of which it had doubtless at one time been possessed. A fringe of straight black hair lay over his brow, and in more tangled order about his ears. But he had neither beard, whiskers, nor moustache, and a peculiar drop of the lower jaw indicated one of those idiots or "innocents," specimens of whom were found in nearly every part of the country, and who were per-

mitted to roam about from one village or farm-house to another out of a tender regard in which there was a touch both of human pity and of sacred awe. The rest of Allan's garb and appearance corresponded with this character. He wore the remains of a long-tailed coat, held together by a twist of straw round the breast; and his pantaloons, though of equally fashionable origin, hung in tatters from the knee over his bare legs. His feet were also bare, but the soles were covered with sandals of cow-hide, tied by light straps of same material over the toes and instep and round the ankle. These sandals did not wear long, but they could be easily replaced.

"What hast become of thee, fool?" added Claverhouse. "I thought ye had fled the country, or turned Covenanter."

Allan, giving a tremor to his lower jaw,

which seemed to pass over his body, lowered himself toward the ground after the manner of an awkward woman's curtsey, or like the crouch of a spaniel trembling under the lash, which had the effect of conveying to Claverhouse, with due obeisance, a sense of horror at the idea of fleeing the country or being a Covenanter.

"Let me rin wi' ye, my Lord," said the "innocent," in an imploring accent. "I'll be your gillie, and try a' the fords and the flows afore the horses."

"No, poor Allan," said Claverhouse. "No safe-conduct to-day. We have long and hard rides. Too much for you."

To which objection Allan only replied by springs and motions of his body in imitation of a horse in gallop.

"Well, fall to the rear, you scarecrow," said Claverhouse, laughing, and springing into the saddle.

"It's God feeds the craws that neither harrow nor saws," said Allan, as he phrased round the stirrup, and stroked the bearskin; "and it's the michty Graeme that protec's puir Allan Peerie awas." And so saying slouched to the rear of the troop, where he became the centre of a crowd of boys, while Clavers was riding along the ranks.

"Come a' to Jock Fool's house, and ye'll get bread and cheese," said Peerie to the urchins, and taking a cock's feather from his breast, stuck it in his hat, and had just tightened the thongs of his cowhide soles, when the order was given to advance.

CHAPTER XI.

The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.

Touchstone.

THE dragoons moved slowly through the Street and the environs of the burgh, four abreast; Clavers taking his place in the rear, with two orderlies and trumpeter behind, and, last of all, Allan Peerie, bearing an air of real or affected pride and triumph. But on getting into the country, and passing through the hamlet of Kirkinner, the column wheeled, and, lengthening out in twos, rode at a rapid pace along the course of the Bladnoch. When the horses trotted, Allan

trotted; when they cantered, he cantered; and when at length, on a rising upland of hard and open moor, they broke into a gallop, he bounded alongside of Clavers, imitated for a few seconds the long but restrained strides of his charger, then rushed forward till he was near the head of the troop, when he appeared to become much excited, clapping his hands, and crying "Weel dune the wee anes! Hooray for the wee anes!" by which exercise he soon lost ground, and was immediately alongside of Claverhouse again.

"What's wrong wi' ye devil? What wert thou saying to the horses, fool?" demanded Claverhouse.

"Please ye're Grace," said Allan, still keeping the pace, "I canna baith spin and rin," looking up piteously, and now indeed nearly out of wind.

Claverhouse made a motion to the trum-

peter, who sounded "Halt," and an orderly rode forward to the captain with instructions to "bring the horses to a walking pace in close order, and let them draw bridle a little before crossing the ford."

"How dare ye raise your voice above the troop, Allan? What were ye saying?" again asked Claverhouse, in an imperious voice, but sitting as easily on the saddle as if he were preparing for some amusing *tête-à-tête*.

"Eh? I was saying naething," replied Allan, with a vacancy and bewilderment of countenance, in which not the slightest trace of rational understanding could be detected. "I was only oot o' mysel', but it was sae funny to see the wee horses beating the big anes."

"Where do ye come from, Allan? Ye're not a Galloway. No one here knows anything about you—where you were born, or

who were your parents. Where do you come from?"

"Frae the Heilans," quickly replied the fool, looking wistfully northward, his eyes resting vaguely on the tops of the nearest mountains. "My mither," he began to say, "was a M'Anulty—"

"Never mind who your mother was," interrupted Claverhouse. "Who was your father, or what your father's name?"

"I downa ken," said Allan in quite a pensive mood. "I only min' leeving wi' my mither far amang the hills in a wee housie, whar' I had aye a warm bed, and parritch in the mornin' and parritch at nicht, and aften kail at mid-day. And I left her, or was forced or bedeeled awa frae her. I cam' here wi' the Host. But the Host gaed hame, and left me here alane—a' alane," added Allan, with a rather extra

droop of the lower jaw as he dwelt most melancholily on the situation.

"Poor unfortunate idiot," said Claverhouse to himself as he turned in his saddle, and looked to the front.

The troops were again in sight of the Bladnoch, and were moving slowly and in regular form along a winding descent to the bed of the stream.

Allan, in reconnoitring the stream—though the crossing of the Bladnoch was no great difficulty for mounted men, yet not to lose the *bonâ fide* character he had established—begged of Claverhouse to be allowed to show the ford.

"Do, Allan," said Clavers; "run forward and let us see what your mother wit can accomplish."

So away bounded Peerie ahead of the dragoons, and after a *détour*, in which he was lost to view behind some crags, was

seen in a few minutes striding across an upper reach of the stream with water little above his ankles. On reaching the bank, he waved his arm and beckoned to the troops with much ardour.

"We had better follow the fool," remarked Claverhouse to the captain of the troop; "he is a creature of strong instinct, and has chosen the ford that is easiest for himself. It will be all the more easy to us."

The passage of the stream was soon accomplished by the cavalry, and after a short ride they halted at the manse and kirk of Owan, where a gathering, chiefly of the poorer classes, had already assembled.

The heritors and commonalty of Kirk Owan had been summoned by a proclamation in the Church on the previous Sunday, and other official notices been sent through the parish to meet the Sheriff-Principal on this day at ten o'clock, to bring all their

arms with them, and to be ready to swear that the arms produced were all they possessed. A miscellaneous crowd had obeyed the summons, but they had no arms.

Clavers, with much chagrin as he surveyed his lieges, ordered them to be swept into the Church, where he delivered to them a brief but sententious and fiery harangue. He was more astonished, he said, when he thought of those who were absent than of those who were present. But the vengeance of a righteous Government, anxious to protect alike rich and poor, would fall upon the absentees. He warned those present that if they should be found armed or in possession of arms, after that date, the offence would not be a mere violation of statute or proclamation, but a high State crime, to be punished *ipso facto* by high penalties—even instant death. "I need not ask," said the Sheriff-Principal, "whether you have sub-

scribed to Church and King. But for that you would doubtless have been absent to-day like some others. The curate beside me has the Test lists. Those who have already taken the Test may depart freely and securely to their homes, and those who may not yet have had the opportunity will have it now. They must declare before they leave these walls, and have their names recorded finally on one side or the other."

Clavers, with this parting instruction to the curate and a detachment of the dragoons whom he detailed to see it carried out, was again on horseback, and gave the route to the old tower of Craichlaw, not far distant. What angered him most was that the two sons of Craichlaw, who had come into Wigtown of their own accord two days before with Sir Andrew Agnew and Garthland, and there taken the Test, should not have been at the meeting-place to receive

him, and to aid in the general disarmament. The zeal of Claverhouse was soon felt by his steed. He rode out of the small hamlet at the head of his troop, and was the first to arrive at the gate of Craichlaw, which was closed. But as the horsemen gathered round their leader the gate was opened, and there stood the two tested sons of Craichlaw, holding their horses, bridled, saddled, pistols in the holsters, and carbines slung to the saddles. "These are our arms," they said; "we deliver them up;" and, presenting the hilts of their swords, "these are our last defences," they added—"we surrender them too."

Claverhouse was both chafed and abashed by this procedure. He would much rather at the moment have been resisted. It was only in the feverish passion working in him the last half hour, with all the consciousness of superior and domineering force at

his back, that he had any courage, or, more properly speaking, recklessness of courage. He could have shot down these two young men with much pleasure had they offered any butt to his headlong fury. But, in such submission as they offered, his passion fell down through itself, and he did not know well how to act. Had it occurred to him at the instant to ask whether they would go on their knees, and abjure Bible-reading, praying, conventicling, and God Himself, so far as known to them, as he asked of John Brown, the Lesmahagow carrier, a few months afterwards, he would have achieved another of his great triumphs. But he was in presence just now of an Old Tower and a certain amount of baronial consideration; and this line of interrogatory did not occur to him.

"I don't much care," he said, after some grimace of salutation, "for these surrenders.

I should not have asked either your horses or your arms. These are trifles not required of gentlemen. But why not have come to the assembly of the parish, and aided the authorities in establishing proper order?"

"Do your own work, Sheriff," said the elder son, with provoking gravity. "You have left us nothing to do."

"But your father?" said Claverhouse. "How is your father?"

"Our father," replied the younger son, with more passion, "is how it scarcely becomes his sons to describe. He is old, and frail—sunk in grief one hour, and delirious in rage the next—and it's you, and the lords from Edinburgh we have to thank. Ye have doomed our Aunt o' Arioland to the plantations, ye—. Go away and trouble us no more," said the youth as he averted his face in sorrow as well as anger.

"That is only a part of the damnation, my young friend, that is likely to fall upon you," cried Clavers, the heroic passion rising again to fever height. "Take the horses and the arms," he said to an officer, "and let us advance."

The gallant Sheriff-Principal gave the route to Mertoun, which lay along a well-beaten track. It was part of the common road of Scotch and Irish travellers, and of such traffic as there was at that period between the two countries. But the pass-port system had been enforced so rigorously of late that it was solitary as a moorland footpath. The gate of Mertoun was not only open, but the two small turrets by which it was flanked were decked with flowers and evergreens, and small white flags, as on a gala day. Sir Godfrey M'Culloch had made his peace so well with the Government that he and Sir William

Maxwell of Monreith had been deemed by the Royal Commission at Wigtown the most suitable gentlemen in the shire, though both were surrounded with much odour of "covenantry," to be charged with the duty of tendering the test to the commons, the one in the Presbytery of Stranraer, the other in the Presbytery of Wigtown. Sir Godfrey, expecting this visit, was riding towards the gate, when the troop wheeled into the avenue, and passed slowly over a raised causeway to the island on a lake, where Mertoun Tower, its offices and garden, and defences, stood as they had been designed hundreds of years before.

Allan Peerie, who had been following Claverhouse steadily through these proceedings, and had sat on the pulpit-stairs of Kirk Owan during the harangue as grave a listener as any on that occasion, passed into the avenue in the train of the

others. But he took an immediate opportunity of gliding behind some bushes, and stretching himself on the grass.

There was luncheon in the dining-room of Mertoun for Clavers and the officers, and bread and cheese and ale for the troopers, and feeds for the horses, in the courtyard. A full hour was spent in this hospitable mansion, with little or no talk of Church or State even between the Laird and Claverhouse.

When the trumpet again sounded, and the troop returned at walking pace along the avenue, Clavers' horse was led to the gate, and Mertoun and the Sheriff-Principal presently followed slowly on foot, and had much conversation as they sauntered a little, some snatches of which reached the quick ear of Allan.

"We quarter to-night in Machermore Castle and Monygove."

". . . . To-morrow . . . Glenken . . . must see Kenmure . . . cannot hold out."

To some remarks of Sir Godfrey at this point Claverhouse said, as nearly as could be heard by Allan, who was wriggling on the grass and stretching his ear serpentlike behind the bushes :—

". . . . Spoiled in his youth by that over-pious poetical fanatic, Rutherford of Anwoth . . . . cannot help himself now . . . . . Earlston ours . . . . caught like a tod in his last fastness . . . . Pshaw!" added Clavers, with a stamp of his spurred heel on the ground, and standing still and proud in the face of Sir Godfrey, "his submission is certain, and the whole country on both sides of the Cree pacified. . . . No more then," as the two again walked on, "but Hay and his outlaws in the upper glens . . . fools . . . stricken and wing-

less eagles, Sir Godfrey, perishing in their eyries on the mountain tops. . . ."

Claverhouse had just mounted when Allan was at his side.

"Poor Allan," said Clavers, smiling. "Have ye ate and drank, my pretty fool?"

Allan shook his head in a very negative and mournful fashion.

"How, sirrah! how is this?"

"Ye didna take me wi' you, sae ye didna. I'm offended," replied Allan, drawing himself up in a gesture of dignity.

"Well, d—n me, that was a mistake," said Clavers; "but there's a noble to you, Allan—take a good supper."

It was only a few miles farther to Machremore Castle, when as the horses were trotted along easily, and Allan with them in what seemed one of his most comfortable moods, Claverhouse, seeing four or five fellows scampering over a ridge on the left with

something like muskets in their hands, called a halt. "Did ye not see them?" he asked of the captain. "Yes, I saw them," said the officer; "they may be rebels, though I am not sure." "Send a party after them, and follow them up to their last lair. Shoot them down if they have arms in their hands, or bring them prisoners. Your men will find their way easily to the Castle."

This done, the main body again moved forward over some distance, when Allan suddenly bolted on the right, and, clearing the ditch at a bound, was taking long strides over a moss on that side.

"Hollo, fool! Stop you thief!" cried Clavers; and Allan not seeming to hear, the Sheriff-Principal fired one of his pistols into the air after the fugitive.

On the report of which the Fool jumped round with his face to the troops, and stood

firm and motionless, his hands on the side of his thighs, in the attitude of a soldier in "attention."

"Where are you going, Peerie?" shouted Claverhouse at the top of his voice.

"I'm gaun to Barnkirk to see if they can gie me a bowl o' broth," shouted back Allan equally loud, with a motion of his hand over his stomach as if to signify that it was aching with huger.

Claverhouse laughed so heartily at the Fool that a laugh broke along the troop as they rode rapidly onward; and the last they saw and heard of Allan that day was him standing clapping his hands, and shouting "Weel dune the wee anes! The wee anes can beat the big anes!"

CHAPTER XII.

The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay fopp'ry of Summer is flown;
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick Time is flying, how keen Fate pursues.

Blacklock.

Affairs had been proceeding quietly that morning in the farm-house of Glenvernoch. Mistress Martha, indeed, appeared happier than she had been for some days. Her spirit, not easily daunted at the worst, seemed to play under a degree or two less of pressure; and the bloom of health on her cheeks, the mirth sparkling in her eyes and smiling round the prettiest of lips, gave evidence of a spring of gladness flow-

ing from the heart outwards. While Margaret, though of a more serious and foreboding disposition, entered with genial sympathy into the cheerfulness of the young lady.

The farmer had not failed the two previous evenings in the family circle to recount the new turns given to the law, as they had been explained to him by Captain Strachan; and had even hinted to Martha, though with some reserve, the injunction now bearing specially on ladies who had been forbidden their own castles, and were living out of the shire or hovering somewhere near in concealment. Yet he could not find in his heart to tell Martha that she was his prisoner, and that he would be under the disagreeable necessity of conducting her, under a military escort, even though it should only be into the hands of her own father. Glenvernoch had the

greatest contempt inwardly for all this "lawing" and military domination. "A cursed bridling and dragooning and champing o' the bits," he thought, "gude neither for the rider nor the steed—wearing oot people's souls to nae end, wasting their substance, stopping a' wark, traffic, and freenship, and bringing swift ruin on baith rulers and ruled." As a man of the world he would have sent the whole system adrift were it only to begin *de novo* like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden; and as a man of the world merely, he felt, at the same time, that troubles, all too common in the country round him, were gathering daily on his own homestead; that a storm was blowing which he could in no wise control, and which must be borne and fended as long as possible.

"I dae pity that young lady in my heart," said Glenvernoch to his wife, when they had

retired to their sleeping-room; "I'm thinking she should gang hame to Baldoon."

"Dinna fash yoursel', Gilbert, aboot that; it doesna concern us particularly," replied Mrs. Wilson.

"But it does concern us," said the farmer, "and may harry us oot o' hoose and haud, and tak' baith you and me to jail like a pair o' auld rebels to be hung up to the craws or deported to the plantations—pretty plantations!—mere roasting ovens, whare ye are either burned to a cinder wi' the sun, or lashed to death wi' the whups o' overseers. It's no a mere Shirra or bailie o' Wigtown we hae to do wi'. I wadna care a crack o' my thoom for sic gentry as that. But it's thae military captains, Clavers and a' his gang, and the haill poo'r o' the Government that are doon on us noo."

"Weel, it's vera sad, Glen," said the

quiet but bright and tender-eyed dame. "But I'm sure, for my ain pairt," she added, "I wud suner gang to jail than carry ony ane there jist noo. Ye canna be meanin' to mak' lady Martha prisoner, or pit your hand to onything ye dinna see the end o'?"

"Me a jail-catcher, wi' dragoons at my tail!" said Glenvernoch—"I'll see them at the devil first! I was only thinking what was best for the young lady hersel', and maist to the wull o' Sir David, under the law as noo laid down, tho' what it may be aught days hence nae mortal man may see."

"Let Martha choose, Glen," said the goodwife. "She's nae gawkie, and I'm much mis-ta'en gif there's a lassie, gentle or semple, in the country mair devoted to her faither, or mair like to follow her faither's wishes, than lady Martha."

Glenvernoch had no more to say, and laid himself down among the blankets, with only a groan or two. There was no further curtain lecture that night. But it would be putting a false interpretation on both to pretend that the hearts of this couple were not alike heavy with anxiety as they composed themselves to sleep. And if, at the breakfast table next morning, Martha was fresh as a summer daisy, thinking and expressing only pleasant thoughts, which came from her in a silvery voice, that was a joy in itself—and the younger branches of the family caught the flavour of her spirit, and the dame was so glad, though for nothing else, to see the young folk so blythe—till Glenvernoch himself was sensibly relieved of a part of the gloom of the previous night—what wonder should it be? When have the young taken the cares of the world so

heavily as the old, or when have the old not felt a balmy reaction in their own spirit on seeing the young more hopeful, brave, and happy than themselves?

There was another reason, though known only to two—nay, let us say at once three, for Margaret had no secrets from her mother.

This was the day on which Martha was to meet her lover, William Hay, at the trysting place up the inner glen. If the fates should be propitious? And Martha as she looked out of the casement, over the meadow, towards the distant crags and the wide-spreading moorland, saw no reason to doubt that the day was favourable —all was so quiet and peaceful, under a calm autumnal sky. No fierceness even in the rays of the sun, and no darkling clouds in any part of the horizon. None even of that grey-leaden colour and appearance as

a physical stringency in the upper heavens, which may result in flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, with heavy showers of rain before the day is over. A clear, bright morning, in which the sun had firm possession of the sky, and yet the solar brightness was met by such a mossy underground of russet, freckled only by green spots here and there, that it seemed to fall only on the whitened tops of hoary crags, its reflections whence melted mildly in a freely moving air.

"Such a lovely day! We'll have a long walk to-day, Margaret," said Martha, with much elation, as she turned from the casement. "We will trip over the mown sward, my dear, and gather meadow scents. See the trouts louping in the burn, stand on the crags, and pu' some sprigs o' bonny heather, will we no, Maggie love?" with a merry laugh at the end of the question.

"I should be happy to gang wi' ye, mistress Martha," said Margaret, smiling at the exuberant spirit of her companion.

"I dinna ken ony reason no," she added, looking to her father.

"Hoot toot! young women," said the dame, "ye're beside yoursels. There's nae hairm in ganging doon to the meadow or anywhere near the toon. But to stravaig a distance in thae times would be madlike."

"I differ from ye there, gudewife," said Glenvernoch. "As lang as ony dochter or guest o' mine keep within the boonds o' the farm—the laird, indeed, has absented himsel', and thereby placed me in a kind o' strait—but even in the absence or desertion, as it may be ca'd, o' the laird, I'll protect them as lang as I'm Glenvernoch, ow'r every step of the grun. But my deeficulty is anither kind. Nane wad be mair

glad, lady Martha, to gang wi' thee than mysel'. But that's impossible, because they are to be here the day to uplift the cess, aboot whilk there has been a collyshang already. Sandy I canna want, and as for Tammas, if he were at han', he would be mair likely to lead ye astray than to gie ye gude guidance. That's my only deeficulty."

"Good Glenvernoch," said Martha, "you have been so kind to me! I can never forget it. But Margaret and I will not need a convoy in a wee afternoon ooting. I have been thinking my stay maun now be short, and without advice from Baldoon, I maun gae back to my retreat in the hills. I'm sure I'll be sorry, sorry, to leave the roof of Glenvernoch." And Martha's voice lost a little of its clearness, and her eyes were dewy as she spoke the last sentence.

"Thou're welcome to this hoose, my young lady," said the farmer, and as for ganging awa', there is nae use thinking aboot that until haflins we may be a' dreiven' awa' thegither. But there are twa things I maun say. It wudna be canny, lady Martha, for thee to be seen or ken'd to be aboot Glenvernoch by ony o' thae sodger folk, or thae spies o' the Sherra—a still waurfarr'd lot, for they're in a' guises, and young women like Marget and thee micht mistack them for decent folk. Therefore gang naewhere ye dinna see a lang gate afore ye, and aye keep the lum-tap o' Glenvernoch in view. My ain folk can a' be weel trusted, but they're thinly scattered, and sae ony strangers ye may chance to see at a distance, keep awa' frae them. If ye follow thae instructions, and a' within Gude's daylicht, I canna see muckle harm or danger."

An approving look and smile of Margaret beamed on her father—a look and smile, which, as often as he recognized, were the light of his heart; and he rose with an air of peculiar contentment as to his arrangement of this business, to attend to the cess and other troublous matters.

Yet he had scarcely passed out into the spence, when he returned, and said :—

"There's anither word I hae tae say. Ye're no thinking o' attending ony prayer meeting or conventicle?"

"Nothing o' the kind in our minds today, I assure you, Glenvernoch," said Martha firmly, but eagerly—a little alarmed at any re-opening of the farmer's endless anxieties.

"And ye'll promise no to gang near meetings, if sic there should be at ony o' the herd's hooses?"

"We promise," said Martha; and ad-

vancing to the farmer, and holding to him her plump little white hand, added, "not only promise, but I give thee my word of honour that the promise will be fulfilled to the letter."

"Weel, that's a' richt, weans," said Glenvernoch, taking Martha's hand. "Let us keep oor prayers and preachings within oor ain bosoms and hallans in the meantime, and aiblins we may yet waur this bruilzie."

CHAPTER XIII.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear, dainty Davie.

Old Scotch Air.

Soon after the mid-day meal Martha and Margaret took their mantles and hoods, which, being too heavy for the warmth of the day, they carried over their arms, and were otherwise attired as became maidens of the period on a saunter of four or five miles back and forward over an upland farm. They had gathered up their pelisse gowns in a form which would even now be deemed almost fashionable, displaying an

embroidered petticoat on the person of Martha, and one of various modest colours on Margaret, which, if not so rich, was scarcely less pretty. Both wore walking-shoes with good soles on them, or rather boots, for they bore an upper fringe of fawn-like brown leather, which laced neatly round the ankles over white lambs'-wool stockings. Martha's mantle and hood were equally suitable for warm and cold weather, summer and winter, for it was two mantles in reality, an inner and an outer. Over her hair, in the plain maiden style, was a cap that was simply a flock of silk, capable of being dressed or crushed into any form, and depending from it was a veil-like drapery covering her neck and shoulders. These were the integuments of the mantle. Margaret had arrived out of simpler materials at much the same toilette. There was nothing common in

the appearance of these young women. They would have been marked anywhere, in Piccadilly or the Row, on foot or on horseback.

With a light step, after passing out from the steading at the end farthest from the more public track, they glided over the large stones in the bed of a stream, and walking round a knoll where they were lost to the following eyes of the goodwife of Glenvernoch, entered on a retired path leading to the northern boundary of the farm.

Martha, before proceeding farther, stood for a few moments looking wistfully towards the south, with thoughts no doubt of Baldoon and her father. Her attention was arrested by an object moving—it might be a heron or wild duck skimming —over the surface of one of those breadths of moor which mark the ascent from the

low lands of Galloway towards the hills; but the outline of the object became every moment more distinct.

"What figure is that flying across the moor?" she asked her companion.

Margaret, after gazing a little, answered "It is Peerie. I ken him baith by his hat and his speed."

Martha gave a little clap of her hands. "We must wait," she said.

"He is aiming direct for Glenvernoch," remarked Margaret, after a brief pause. "My faither likes to hear his crack, and there are many stories aboot him that he is mair than he seems, and has been distraught by the troubles o' the times. But he is aye sure o' his bed and some meat when he comes to us, the hairmless cratur. Will we gang back?"

"He will see us," said Martha, waving her white kerchief.

And certainly the figure appeared to recognize the signal, for it suddenly directed its course in a straight line to the point where the young women stood, while at the same time slackening its speed.

"It's indeed Allan Peerie," said Margaret. "It is no other," said Martha.

As Allan approached the damsels he appeared to be partly taking breath and partly adjusting his attire, but on coming into their presence, Martha having shortened the distance by advancing some steps to meet him, he had all the appearance of "a natural," in which Claverhouse and the reader have already made his acquaintance.

"Allan, Gude-speed," said Martha in a cheery voice, by way of salutation or password, to the uncouth being who stood before her. "Hay, Hay," responded Allan, as he delivered to her a packet more bulky than an ordinary missive; and with

a glance to Margaret, added, "I am going to Glenvernoch," he strode back round the knoll in the direction of the farm house.

"That puir Allan must be a trusty cratur," said Margaret, as Martha stood looking now after him, and now at the packet with an anxiety on her countenance of which it had borne no trace during the day, and which was in marked contrast to the air of joy that had sparkled on it only a few minutes before.

"As trusty as steel," said Martha, "to those who are for the Cause. But it fears me he is the bearer of nae gude tidings. His password, though true, was single. It should have been 'Hay Haight.'"

"What thrums aboot what a fule says," said Margaret. "Havena ye the packet in your hand?"

"Let us sit down," said Martha.

And they sat down on a grey boulder near.

Martha then opened the packet with much courage and as little ceremony, flinging all the exterior wrappage to the air; and its contents were a long purse of gold and silver coins, and a brief writing. The first she made nothing of at the moment, allowing it to fall down at her feet, while she eagerly scanned the second, and then read to herself, without date, place, or signature, in a clear, clerkly hand, but a voice which she felt as the voice of her father, as follows:—

"This is to gif ye to understaun there hae been great processes and on-goings here, and that the law noo is that wives and children above fourteen that hae left by order or hidden are to return to their hames, under bond to be produced on ten days' warning. This edict would appear to ap-

plee to you and sic-like. The bond in your instance has not to this time been pressed for, and may mean only wives, so gif ye were to return ye would be only obeying the law o' hame-keeping, and have gude greeting and shelter frae yere father and ithers—particularly your father, who is langing to see you. Nor can it weel be thocht they would gang to extremes, having your brother so stanch on their side in memory. Albeit, it must be allooed and said further, and what has caused great pity and terror, they hae banished the old Lady o' Arioland to the foreign plantations; and the Lady o' Monreith, e'enbe her son Sir William is ane o' Clavers' magistrates, has been fined a thousand merks for the auld offence o' John at the Pentlands. Whilk things say na mickle for the interest they permit to their ain avooed freends.

"Rebels, and conversing wi' rebels, are noo the same things.

"This, praying, ye may hae God's blessing and direction."

The tears trickled down Martha's cheeks as she read and dwelt, as in a daze, on this letter.

"What does it say?" asked Margaret more than once.

"Woe on them! This will break Willie's heart!" at length replied Martha, with a convulsive sob, which seemed to draw the words from the depths of her soul through her tears; and, rising hastily, added, with more composure, "But we are sitting too long—we will talk while we go."

Margaret lifted the purse as she rose, and put it into Martha's hand.

After nearly an hour's walk, which Martha, talking very little, strove to shorten as much as possible by the quickness of her

pace—now along little strips of natural meadow or fern-covered strath, and now over rough heathery ground, traversed only by narrow sheep tracks—they found themselves passing under the shadow of a craggy ridge covered atop with bramble and other brushwood, save at one point in the distance where the crag rose above all vegetation. A few straggling trees, hazel, mountain ash, and thorn, grew along the bottom and out of crevices in the shelving side of the ridge. A space of hard grassy land skirted this bank of rock and bush, but became marshy on the other side, with a steep moor bounding the scene in that direction. This ravine, or the greater part of it, was within the bounds of Glenvernoch, but it was rarely frequented, and only indeed, by shepherds or drovers who knew its value as a near cut when they sought to make a friendly passage through

Glenvernoch, instead of following the more public tracks.

"This is the trysting-place," said Martha. "Thanks, Margaret, we have no farther to go." But as if unwilling either to look forward or advance, she stood before her companion, and leaned upon her shoulder.

Martha was in a double agony. What if Hay should not be here? If here, what a message had she to give him! What would their fate be in the ever-thickening disasters that seemed to pursue them the longer they clung to each other? Margaret could feel the heart of Martha beating against her bosom; till, looking eagerly round, she was glad to say, "I see some one standing on the crag."

"Where?" exclaimed Martha; and Margaret pointed with her finger along the ridge.

"It must be he," said Martha. "Let

us go out of the shadow and show ourselves. I will soon know."

It was only the outline of a human figure on the rock between the sunshine and the shade, but the figure was so well known to Martha that they had only walked a few steps along the open part of the ground when she said, with a bright smile to Margaret, "It is Willie;" and, walking forward, waved her kerchief in the air. The figure was then seen to uncover, and bowing, to disappear by a rapid movement from the crag.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thine am I my faithful fair,
  Well thou may'st discover;
Every pulse along my veins,
  Tells the ardent lover.
To thy bosom lay my heart,
  There to throb and languish;
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
  That would heal its anguish.

Burns.

William Hay, of Arioland, was scarce thirty years of age, and though his life had now for some few years been the hard and desolate life of an outlaw, yet it had been conducted with a bravery of spirit and freedom of movement, and with a sense of power and rectitude of purpose, which had

only served to develop all his manly qualities both of mind and person. He had gone out an ardent youth in honourable war, and while pursued, proscribed and hunted about, he still deemed himself an honourable man, and had never stained the bright escutcheon of an honourable soldier. And every inch an athletic soldier he appeared on this occasion—of more than middle stature, of frank and open but firm and manly countenance, no dress but what displayed while giving utmost freedom to a well-proportioned person, and no arms but his keen sword, which did not dangle about him, but hung close, almost unseen, on his thigh—as he leapt out of a thicket fifty yards in front of the maidens as they advanced up the ravine.

He carried his broad-brimmed hat in his hand, and approached them bare-headed.

Martha broke loose from her companion, and ran forward to meet him.

And Margaret had then a rare living picture to see. She thought she had read or fancied something like it. All the young men of Galloway who had rushed to arms, and were suffering in what she deemed "the good cause," were known to her by name, and they had all a place in her heart, and she had imagined them in every form of grateful fancy. Hay, as he now appeared in person before her, rather exceeded even her fancies. She thought he was like a handsome forester or gallant soldier of fortune, of whom she had read in ballads, with the halo over him, in her eyes, of valour and endurance in a sacred hest. So she neither wondered nor was offended at the warmth with which Martha threw herself into his arms; for in her breast she felt she could almost have done likewise.

When she had advanced, slowly and timidly, to the lovers, they were holding each other by both hands, and looking into the happiest faces she thought she had ever seen. She would have drawn back, but Martha said, "This is Margaret Wilson, my friend, my sister in the highest sense, whom I have learned not only to love, but to reverence. This is the William, Margaret, we hae talked of." "Your humble and grateful servant," said Hay, bowing to Margaret. "The friend of Martha has a place in my heart only second to her own."

"Walk with us, Margaret," said Martha; "we have no secrets from you."

And Hay, giving one hand to Martha, offered the other to Margaret, which in courtesy she did not refuse; but something in her breast told her that her presence would be out of order, might be embarrassing both on one side and the other; and

after walking a few steps, she stopped, and would go no farther.

"Why?" asked Hay.

And Margaret looking in his face with an arch smile, ready to break into a girlish laugh, replied, "I hae heard the milkmaids say, Mr. Hay, that twa 's company, three 's nane. But, besides, I see some nits on the hazels, and there is a bank here where my brither and me hae gathered flowers. I can amuse mysel' while ye are talking, and maybe bring nits and a heather posie for ye baith."

Margaret releasing her hand, as she spoke, would have withdrawn, when Hay, taking a firmer hold than before, and Martha wheeling round along with him, Margaret found herself in the middle of a circle.

"You see, my young queen," said Hay, "you are a prisoner of war, and we'll only give you parole on one condition—that you

do not go out of sight. I confess to you, Margaret, I am a little beyond my own lines here, and danger, though unexpected, may arise. We must all three be within call, and within call we will be as safe as in a fortress."

"Weel, weel," said Margaret cheerfully, "I promise ye no to gang far."

Hay had no apprehension of danger in his own mind, but he had nothing of a joyful nature to communicate to his faithful sweetheart, while Martha was burdened with what she knew would be a tiding of almost unutterable woe to him; and there was a presentiment in the hearts of both that their interview must be both brief and anxious.

They sat down under a thorn tree, where there was a jutting ledge of rock overhung with bushes—an impenetrable thicket as it seemed, nearly under the highest part of

the craggy ridge where Hay had first been seen.

Who will profess to trace the working or measure the resources of a woman's love? But is it a wonder that Martha, on this occasion, should have endeavoured to ascertain, by a few simple caresses, and distant questions, and querulous glances, whether her lover knew anything of what she knew of what had occurred within the last two days at Wigtown? Or that seeing, on this preliminary inspection, only beams of present happiness in the countenance of her lover, she hesitated to break the charm of the moment; and yet, unable to draw herself away from the burden in her heart which she knew would be a heavy grief to his, continued to talk of events at the county town—the commission, the increased rigour of the laws, and the military force to which there appeared to be no resistance from the

barons and other accustomed authorities of Galloway—communicating as much of her information as she could, without touching on the cruel doom pronounced on his own mother ?

Or is it more wonder that when Hay chanced to say, in this part of the conversation, that he was hourly expecting Allan, Martha started and shuddered so palpably that a cloud of anxiety passed over his hitherto radiant features, and drawing her head to his bosom, he said, "Why do you tremble ?" and kissing her forehead as he placed it between both hands, and looked into her face, added, "My love, you either know or fear more than you are willing to speak. What is it ?" Or that Martha, even in this crisis, declined, with a melting look, the pointed question addressed to her, and, giving a new detour to the conversation began to press her lover with a series

of interrogations of her own? What he had been doing? what he had learned? since they last met.

Martha had a bulletin in her pocket, which she was firmly resolved to render to Hay before they parted; but she was tenderly saving of it, and kept it sacred to the last moment.

"What about Kenmure?" was one of Martha's anxious questions.

"Kenmure," said Hay, "is still neither cold nor hot—lukewarm, and always more lukewarm. His heart is warm enough, and beats as it only ever can beat. But the brain is unsteady, wavering, feeble, and the limbs all but paralytic from this weakness of the brain. The stout Gordon of Earlston has left the country, and his castle is in the hands of the dragoons. This is one great stoop of Kenmure gone. He has been losing friends, great and small, every

day the last month through his own irresolution, and his vain hope of conciliating the tyrants while preserving his own independence. The likelihood is he will find himself their slave and tool, and then pine and die of remorse. It is the same on the Ken as it is here on the Cree. The leaders who could gather the population round them, and sweep away Clavers and his bloody gang as easily as I sweep away that fly"—striking down a long-legged and long-winged anatomy flickering too near him in the autumn sunlight—" but they hesitate, trim, and bargain for a quiet life till they find the defection around them so great that they have, one after another, to run away themselves, and leave their houses, arms, horses, cattle, and gear in the hands of the enemy. My dear Martha, I conceal from you nothing. The situation is as bad as it could be almost

dreamed to be. But there is still a sanctuary among these hills, not only of warlike defence, but of free worship of God, in whom our trust is. The tyrants, unwittingly, have made it stronger in true men than they reck of."

"I no more doubt," said Martha, "that this rage of despotism will pass away like a cloud than I doubt my own being, than I doubt the power of conscience in the hearts of men, or have lost my faith in the King of kings. The tiger will slake his thirst for blood, and perish of his own surfeit. But you, Willie, you!" added Martha, with much tenderness. "Is it wise that you should stand out alone?"

"Martha," replied the Outlaw firmly, "you know according to present law I should have been hanged some years ago in the Grassmarket. Under God's will I

have not been hanged; nor shall I be hanged; I will die fighting."

"But having done all, why the one doom more than the other? Why not cover yourself, like so many, in the pavilion of the Divine mercy till the storm blows over?"

"Yes! I might be a fugitive. But whither? To some foreign shore if it could be reached."

"No, no," said Martha, wringing her hands; "not that—not yet at least, not now." And hot tears began to drop from her eyes.

"Be of brave heart, Martha," said Hay, as he took her hand in his. "I am where I can defend myself. One cannot take the protection of leal hearts without using every means of warding from them the danger to which the protection exposes them. Much may be done to make these

mountain solitudes a terror to the base and cowardly murderers. We have made them dangerous to approach. We have rescued prisoners. Some of their victims under escort to Edinburgh we have wrung from them at Enterkin. We have forced at dead of night a cell in the jail of Wigtown, and set the captives free under their chamber windows. The scores whom they have doomed but yesterday to the plantations or to further torture at Edinburgh, must all pass through these hills. We can save some of these poor people, or they must guard them with all the cut-throats they have in the shire. There will be relief on one hand or the other. I do not despair of some advantage, or even of signal revenge."

The heroic spirit of Martha drank every word of these warlike sentences. They were like elixir to a fainting heart. The

idea that Hay might rescue his mother passed through her mind like a lovely dream, kindling a transport of enthusiasm. Now she thought was the time to deliver her whole message.

"I have seen Allan," she said quietly.

"Where?" eagerly inquired Hay.

"A few minutes after we left Glenvernoch. He is there now. He brought me this letter," replied Martha, handing him the missive which she knew to be from her father, and resting her arms on her lover's knees, looked up to him calm, but oh! how eager, while he read.

Shortly the paper began to waver in his hand. A shadow gathered on his brow, and spread over his face, but a moment since full of composed cheerfulness, as when a dark cloud fleets between the earth and the sun. His lips became firmly compressed. His eyelids twitched, as if he

had misread some sentence, and he held the paper nearer as if to read a second time. He changed colour, now pale, now livid, and presently, the red blood mounting to his cheek, he rose to his feet, took a step or two forward, and was raising his right arm in the air to utter some imprecation or some words of anguish or resolution, when his arm dropped, and he stood as if the whole current of his thought and passion had been suddenly averted.

The heads of a large drove of cattle were seen rising over the rim of the moor at a little distance northward. He turned his eyes along the ravine the other way. Margaret was approaching with a bunch of heather blossom and other wild flower which she had found growing under some trees on a green shelf of the ridge.

"Come, love," he said to Martha, who had been watching the struggle of his

feelings with mingled sympathy and alarm. "Here is Margaret with flowers, let us meet her."

"Do you see that drove on the moor, Margaret?" he asked, pointing in the direction. "Where do they come from?"

"They come the Kircailie way," said Margaret, "or frae other farms on the Carrick road."

"Do drovers come this way?" he asked.

"Sometimes, but no aften," replied Margaret. "It's a near road frae the Wester to the low land or the toon o' Monygove, and when my faither agrees they sometimes pass this way."

Hay conducted the young women under cover of the ledge of rock. "Allow me," he said, and helped them to put on their mantles. "Now, follow me, and do not be afraid."

Opening a way into the thicket, which in a step or two became a bower wherein one could walk with little inconvenience, he led them into the mouth of a cavern in the rock, of indefinite size, for it was only lighted over a few yards from the entrance by so much of the outer day as struggled through the overhanging foliage.

"I am truly sorry," said Hay, with a humorous smile, "that I have no better withdrawing-room just now for ladies so dear to me. But no living creature is here save my faithful Billy"—alluding to his dun horse—"who is never so content as when he and I sleep or rest in a palace of this mould." And Billy, on hearing his master's voice, gave audible evidence of his presence in some recess of the cavern. "Here is the solid whinstone wall," continued Hay, "and here a rude heather couch on which you may sit down without

fear of falling. On the other side you hear the trickle of water. It is a cold pure spring, and does not wet the floor, which, though somewhat uneven, is covered for the most part with moss as soft as a Persian carpet, and nearly as bright in its hues. In the darkest night a pine torch or two produce a wonderful illumination. For there are spangles, stalactites, and phosphorescences on the roof and along the walls, which catch every ray of the dusky red glow and send it back multiplied a thousand fold in light and colour. Now, my fair ones, bide contentedly here a little till I return to you."

"Willie!" exclaimed Martha, "do not leave us! For Heaven's sake, do not leave us! Where are you going? What have you to do?"

"I am only going," replied Hay, "behind the ledge to see this drove passing.

If there is any danger I will avoid it. I guess it is only Tam Picardy, who is more friend, I believe, than enemy. But if more enemy than friend an apparition of the Outlaw may do him good. His tether of tongue and trading is too long and too loose."

And with these words, Hay, relieving himself from Martha, sprang out among the bushes.

CHAPTER XV.

(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.

St. Paul.

Wae to the heart that fram'd the thought!
Curs'd be the hand that fir'd the shot!
When in my arms Burd Ellen dropp'd,
And died for luve of me.

Border Ballad.

"You will have heard of such places and the uses they serve in troublous times," said Martha to her companion, who stood looking round in much surprise. "They are heaven-made keeps with which Scotland abounds, and to which, when every

other shelter has failed, the hunted and oppressed have fled in all ages. But never have they covered in their secret shades more noble and worthy souls than in these days."

"I hae heard o' caves aboot the Buchan," observed Margaret, "but I never was in ane before, and Glenvernoch is the last place where I could hae thocht there was sic a hollow in the rocks."

"Our Father in Heaven," said Martha, lowering her voice to a reverential whisper, "has made these caverns with His own hand to meet the storms through which our wild country has had to pass, and to cover His outcast people from the blood-thirsty cruelty of the oppressor, as He appointed the cities of refuge in Canaan."

"I hae heard stories o' this Tod's Crag, as it's ca'd," rejoined Margaret, drawing closely to Martha in a timid sensation—"stories

o' voices heard in the wuns withoot, soons o' piping and dancing within, and being haunted by fairies and broonies. But I dinna believe sic ferlies, though I hae often lain on stormy nichts, when I was young, and heard the voices and the wild music as they had been talked aboot at the fireside, and hae seen wi' my closed een the troops o' red-coated fairies wheeling in the blasts a' roon' Glenvernoch, and gathering frae a' pairts, aye thicker and thicker, roon' the Crag, till they disappeared through the sides o' the rock. There was naething fearsome to me in the fairies. I liked to think o' them. But these were child's fancies. Our Father in Heaven touches our spirit with His omnipotent Spirit, and has a' the wuns, and the waves, and the flame under His ain poo'r. Yet the darkness," added Margaret, looking round, "makes me a wee eerie."

Martha, taking Margaret by the hand, felt round the wall of the cave. Over several yards it was hard and dry, though in some parts rough and jagged. Then a corner, where a less solid and smoother rock seemed to lie across the cavity, and bar farther progress. An airy current here fanned the hot brows of the young women, and in the dead stillness low whistling sounds as of air passing through distant fissures caught their ears. Passing along this slaty partition, they came to a breach in the rock; where, looking through the aperture, their eyes more accustomed to the darkness, they became sensible of the presence of some living animal. The polished brass butts of the pistols in the holsters, and other glittering points of the accoutrement, glanced like little star-points in a dark cloud, and became centres by which the eye could con-

nect one appearance with another, till Billy, Hay's horse, stood in full outline before them, his head well buried in a nose-bag, and some armfuls of half-dried meadow grass round his fore feet. Margaret, peering further into the darkness, followed eagerly a zig-zag trail of whity smoke as it seemed—one moment bowing low, another standing tiptoe, in order to trace it to its source. "I see light," she suddenly said; and Martha, placing herself in her companion's line of vision, saw a small round opening of bright roseate in the distance, like a pale red moon, or a circular patch cut out of the golden western sky.

"There must be another entrance," said Margaret. "The horse could not come through the bushes."

The two young women now returned to the mouth of the cave, eager to see Hay or to know what was passing outside. They

heard his voice speaking to some one who answered him, and the thud of hoofs and heavy breathing which usually attend the passage of a herd of cattle. Then came an interval of silence, in which they became every moment more anxious, and advanced step by step till they stood in the bowery part of the thicket.

Hay, on going to his postern, had seen the full herd passing in scattered form down the slope of the moor, followed by only one person—a rough lad mounted on a small, shaggy pony, and leading a stout nag in halter. He seemed not a moment at rest, turning the shelty and led horse from one flank of the drove to the other, and pressing them down behind some rocks, where they passed out of sight, and in a few minutes began to straggle over the grassy skirts of the ridge.

"Hallo! lad," cried Hay, who had

stepped forward to meet the driver. "Wha's beasts hae ye?"

"What gars ye speer?" shouted back the lad, in whom the reader will recognize the artful waif of humanity, who had set out from Wigtown with Picardy and the Bailie some days before.

Hay, not to waste words, strode towards the youth, who, had he been himself at that moment, would not have been easily approached. He would have made an instant somersault over the head of his shaggy pony, and the pony would have followed him, throwing out its hind legs furiously wherever he chose to run, or to tumble head over heels. But in this juncture Picardy's young man was somewhat fettered by his led horse—a strong, spirited, and unbroken Galloway—and he resolved to sit his saddle and wait the issue of events.

Hay, pulling his ears, said, "None of

your impudence, master malapert! Answer civil questions civilly."

"I didna mean ony offence, sir," whined the youth. "But ye're no Glenvernoch or Glenvernoch's son, and I didna ken wha ye micht be. But ye're nae doot the laird himsel. This is Tam Picardy's drove, sir, and I'm Tam Picardy's man."

"Where do they come from?" Hay demanded.

"The maist-feck are frae Kircailie, sir," replied the youth, "but some ootlers are frae here and there."

"And where's your master?"

"He's only a wee ahint, sir. He gaed into the herd's hoose ow'r the muir to hae a daffin' wi' the wife or the dochter, or maybe some yill. He'll be here in a winking."

"Well," said Hay, "you go forward and herd the nowt, and keep them here till your

master comes. There's a good bite for them —besides, they are over-driven already."

The Arab, much impressed by the authority of this sudden challenger of the drove, here took off his bonnet as in token of obedience; and yet, as if some further ceremony of a more religious nature was necessary, made free to add—"But gif Tam, sir, should lunner me for stopping the drove, wull ye stand atween him and me?"

"Certainly," said Hay. "No harm can come to you, callan."

"But wull ye say, 'deevil tack you tae that?'" solemnly inquired the boy—this being a form of oath held in as much esteem by the Scotch Arabs of the period as the Test and Abjuration were held by Sheriff-Principal Clavers, or even the Privy Council at Edinburgh.

"Away, ye shameless loon, and do at

once what ye are bade to do on the word of a gentleman."

Hay had no sooner seen the Arab turning the head of the herd, and having tied the led horse to the stump of a tree, proceeding to play the usual antics with his pony, than his ear was arrested by a piping song among the rocks of the hollow round the end of the ridge, and which, though the singer was at the moment unseen, he had little doubt was the jolly voice of Tam Picardy, whose ready command of many old lilts was well-known in the country.

> "O, green grow the rashes, O,
> Green grow the rashes, O;
> The King may rise, the Kirk may fa',
> At sune or syne, at mirk or daw,
> But what to me sic warldly fashes, O,
> While green grow the rashes, O,—"

sang the drover, swinging in his saddle in harmony partly with his lilt and partly with a *quantum suf.* of strong liquor, and leading

like his young man a sprightly gelding in halter, as he was seen rising out of the hollow into the open. Where, on finding his herd turned, and a martial figure in the middle space, his tune abruptly stopped.

"Ye're very merry, Tam," said Hay, as the drover halted at some little distance. "What's your good news, eh?"

"William Hay, as I'm a leeving sinner!" exclaimed the drover in undisguised surprise. "Hoo are ye, Mr. Hay, and hoo hae ye been, man, this lang time?" he added, giving a kick to his nag, and holding out his hand as if suddenly seized with a warm emotion of friendship.

"Stop, Picardy, stop!" said Hay, throwing up his arm. "I hae heard your word about me in the farm-kitchens and farmyards up country. It was a word far north of friendly. And I know the wily arts by which you are wheedling the terror-stricken

folk oot o' their stock and gear. We maun hae a parley before a hand-shaking."

The drover's face, red enough as it was, became like scarlet on these words of Hay, but assuming a bold front, he replied with some anger, "It's no for you, Hay, or the like o' you, to question men in their lawfu' calling."

"Lawfu', Tam," said Hay, with a freezing sneer. "Lawfu'! Is it not rather the downthrow of all law? Who knows what the law now is? A law of unbounded persecution, murder, rapine; one enormity to-day—another, only more infamous and more lawless, to-morrow; anything that spues out of the mouth of Clavers—drunk of vanity, tyranny, and blood! And you, Tam, who know what law once was; you, who have had cheer and welcome on every barony in the shire now a prey to the spoiler, who have been fed and warmed a

score of times by dames and maidens driven from their homes, or dragged to prison, and doomed to worse than death itself—you, in the pretence of a lawfu' calling, to make yourself the tool of such base despots, and to spread with all your art and cunning among these honest hill-farmers the devastation you have seen in the low country! Shame, Tam, shame on ye! Look at yourself, man. Has a greater renegade and blackguard ever trode the earth than you?"

"I am not responsible for the state of the country," replied the drover, for the moment subdued by this pungent appeal to sympathies not quite dead in his heart. "There's no a beast in the herd I have not honestly bargained for, and carry an honest receipt for."

"A good many of them," remarked Hay, "are from Kircailie, I believe. Whose receipts have you for them?"

"Alexander's," replied Picardy.

"There you are, Tam," said Hay. "You know as well as any that three parts of the stock on Kircailie are the property of Gilbert, and you bargain in his absence with his weakly conforming and non-conforming brother Sandy for all these cattle on your own terms. Will ye put this point to the test by driving them back and getting the award of the proper owners?"

To this question Picardy returned only a malign stare.

"And to whom do you deliver them?" continued Hay. "There is scarce a country house or barony in the Machars or the Rhinns but is occupied by dragoons, harried, or turned topsy-turvy. There is no stocking, no marketing. For whom are you buying?"

Whether under an impulse of animal passion, or an acute sting of conscience

sometimes not less infuriating than passion itself, or an amalgam of the two, with some hideous prospect of gain in the background, Picardy exclaimed, "Outlaw! there is a price on your head!" and fired one of his pistols at Hay without effect. His horse reared, but quickly drawing a second piece from the belt under his plaid, he would have fired again had not Hay, no less alert, struck his arm so heavily with his sheathed sword that the pistol dropped out of his hand; and in an instant more Picardy had the naked blade of Hay at his throat.

Martha and Margaret, on hearing the pistol shot, broke out from their retreat in alarm, and rushed to the scene of this affray. Martha flung her arms round Hay, while Margaret, seizing the bridle of Picardy's horse, and throwing herself into an attitude facing Hay, cried in a voice of command and indignation, rather than

appeal, "Dinna lift the bluidy hand on Glenvernoch!" "What shame!" she added, as she glanced from one to the other.

Hay, disconcerted by this interruption, stood a few moments in silence. The presence of the young women forbade further prosecution of the terms to which he had hoped to bring Picardy, and which the murderous but futile rashness of the drover would now probably have promoted. At the same time he perceived the danger to his fair companions themselves from their discovery in these circumstances by so trustless a person as Picardy. Hay had not foreseen the hostile attack of the Drover, nor could he now foresee all its possible consequences.

He lifted Picardy's loaded pistol from the ground, and said to him, "Deliver me the weapon in your belt. It is doubly wrong for you to carry arms. It is for-

bidden by the law you serve, and you would have used them just now to take away life without provocation. Give me your pistol, and owe your life to Margaret Wilson, for after what you had done I would have smitten you as I would have smitten a wild beast."

Picardy handed his empty pistol to Hay.

"Lady Martha," he said, in the act of surrender, "gin I had kent o' your presence here I should ha'e been mair wary. But Hay maun alloo he wasna unco ceevil to me. I ax your pardon, lady, and if ye ha'e ony message to Sir David I'm sure I'll carry it wi' a' my heart and gude will."

"I have no message to my father," replied Martha, "but ye have had many a kind welcome at Baldoon, Tam, and if ye can gi'e any joy there by good behaviour I'll overlook any ill-intent ye may have

had, and may make amends for, to Mr. William."

"Go your ways, Tam," said Hay, "and thank the ladies for your life. I sought only to bring you to reason and some sense of common justice, as in better days. You would have done to me—you know what. Go your way this time, but don't let me see you again beyond where we stand on the same business or in the same temper, if ye would avoid a bitter ending. Go, and remember while you breathe your life-debt to Margaret of Glenvernoch."

The Drover, glad enough of this reprieve, put his horses in motion, and looking back while still within hearing, said,—

"Mistress Margaret, tell your father, gif I shouldna see him, that I will settle wi' him honestly for the waygate through the farm."

Margaret was the first to break silence as they saw Pacardy and his drove falling once more into marching order. "Mistress Martha," she said, "we maun gang hame noo—the sun is far doon."

"True," replied Martha, looking wistfully at her lover, who stood almost motionless, Martha leaning on his arm, but an infinitely heavier weight pressing on his heart.

"Martha and I have only a few more words," said Hay, "before parting."

"I can weel understaun' that," said Margaret smiling, "but dinna waste your time while I look for Martha's veil among the bushes."

Martha had time to consult her lover as to the anxious question of the moment presented in her father's missive. Whether she should return to Baldoon, and place herself under the grip of "the law?" A

question which, with his mother's doom burning at the core of his heart, Hay answered promptly and scornfully in the negative. It was deemed prudent between them that a longer stay even at Glenvernoch would be unsafe. There was not a laird's, farmer's or herd's house about Glenvernoch where she would not be as welcome as in Glenvernoch itself. "Glencaird," said he; "Mackie is still at home, though proscribed, and would protect you as I should. But they will advance their military posts farther and farther as long as they have power. The small bush is often a better bield than the high tree. The retreat above the Caldons is the safest of all." Hay had further signified arrangements for her removal when Margaret came back; and he convoyed the maidens down the glen, by a shorter road than that by which they had come up, till the farm-

house came in view in the twilight—his parting words to Martha being, "Allan! —tell Allan to meet me at the Crag to-night. I am impatient to see him."

CHAPTER XVI.

> If honour calls, where'er she points the way,
> The sons of honour follow, and obey.
>
> *Churchill.*

"PEERIE" was allotted for his sleeping apartment a small shed at the end of the outhouses, usually assigned to travellers of the poorer class who claimed a night's lodging at Glenvernoch. The farmer himself had seen an ample bedding of clean straw laid down for "the gangrel cratur," from whom he had enjoyed an hour or two of deeply interesting gossip at the lower kitchen fire in the course of the evening; and some still kindlier hands

would seem to have furnished the shed with various other comforts. Allan, at least, had no difficulty in changing the disguise in which he was accustomed to travel about the country, and which he carried to an artistic perfection when attending upon Clavers. The rimless peaked hat was set aside for a Kilmarnock bonnet, and a grey plaid was wrapped round him in form both of jacket and kilt by an easy adjustment, of which the large shepherd plaid is still capable; while over his lower limbs he drew a pair of woollen over-alls. In this dress, as soon as the farm-house was quiet, he lifted the latch and proceeded up the glen.

Hay, after lighting rudely the interior of the cave, relieving Billy of saddle and other trappings, and spreading for him a bed of leaves, had been pacing backward and forward in the open air near an hour,

when a signal somewhat like the whoop of an owl assured him that Allan was approaching. The two men grasped hands and embraced each other with an ardour, which would be hardly understood without explanation, and probably renders this the proper place to give the reader some account of the ties which bound them to each other.

William Hay, of Arioland, was one of the young gentlemen of Galloway, as has been transiently stated, who after the victory of the Covenanters over Claverhouse at Drumclog, took arms, and with such followers as they could gather round them, joined the array of insurgents from the south-western counties of Scotland, who drew to a head at Bothwell Brig, resolved to brave a tyranny which, under the administration of Lauderdale, had been every year becoming more intole-

rable, and which, it was too obvious under his upstart military instrument, Graham of Claverhouse, would soon reduce every man and woman in Scotland who had souls in their bodies to the extremities of fire and sword. The insurgents found themselves confronted at Bothwell Brig by a strong Royalist army, under the command of the Duke of Monmouth, whom Charles, in one of his repentant moods in which there was always an amalgam—one part clemency and good nature, one part policy, and two parts arbitrary power and callous indifference—had sent down as his most popular representative with power to overawe, but with instructions to cajole his rebellious Scottish subjects. The royal authority, however, was lifted much too high even by Monmouth for the temper of the insurgent army, and a brief but furious battle ensued. The mounted men from

Galloway were numerous enough to form a large troop, of which M'Culloch was captain, and Hay lieutenant. The bridge over the Clyde was the turning point of the whole engagement. Stoutly for awhile did the insurgents defend the bridge, but having to guard at the same time the passage of the river fordable by horse both above and below, they failed to maintain their force at this *tête du pont* with sufficiency to resist the Royalists who threw their main strength upon it from first to last. Step by step the bridge was gained by the Royalists. The barrier over the keystone had been no sooner closed by the insurgents than it was being broken down by the axes of the Highlanders and the hammers of the English siegemen. In a few minutes more the insurgent defenders were forced back, and Royalist infantry and horse were rushing freely pell-mell

across the bridge. The small body of insurgent cavalry, in this crisis, rode gallantly forward to the breach where the footmen and gunners had failed, thinking they would ride down and sabre the enemy in piecemeal as they issued from the narrow bridgeway. They were met by Hamilton of Preston, chief in command of the insurgent force, who, seeing the unavailableness of the movement, or preoccupied with some idea of rallying on a second line of defence, called upon them to stop. Captain M'Culloch shouted the order, but Hay and a few of the men in advance were carried onward with a preceding troop to the bridge. Meanwhile Clavers had been pushing the Royal Dragoons through the river, up to the girths and over the tails of the horses in water, not a few toppling dead into the water under the musketry fire from the opposite bank; and as soon as the bridge

was cleared, the gallant Graham passed over that safer way with the remainder of his cavalry. The insurgent horsemen found themselves at the bridge almost lost to each other in a mass of foes of all arms.

Hay was one of the last to escape from that fatal mêlée, and as his steed bore him through what had become a general rout of the insurgent army, he became conscious of being closely followed by an attendant, whom he had seen in the thick of the fight at the bridge, and whose life he had saved by a timely sweep of his sabre. This was Allan, who, attracted by the gallant bearing of Hay, and moved by gratitude for the rescue he afforded him when fighting desperately with three of Clavers' troopers, had clung to his new found chief, resolved that there should be one sword between him and the enemy in the effort to escape. They fought their

way through the press of the retreat, and rode on when all pursuit was at an end over hill and moor till they arrived, on the same horses as had carried them in the fight, at the house of Arioland, in Galloway, a hundred and thirty miles from the field of battle. There they found shelter, though only for a few days. William Hay was proclaimed, in company with many others, as "a rebel," and spies and bloodhounds began to gather about Arioland. Hay and Allan had to be closely concealed, and finally passed out afoot into the wilderness to take care of themselves, under the heartrending grief of the lady of Arioland, to whom William was as the apple of her eye. William's father, then still hale, was probably not less grieved at heart. His name had been in the county commissions of peace and war in the time of Cromwell, and again in this reign of Charles II., when to

harbour or countenance a son who was a rebel was to be a rebel one's self, and to bear all the dread penalties of rebellion. The old squire, however, while passing on his son from one darkness of outlawry to another, showed in a symptomatic trait worthy of mention, where his heart lay. On the secret departure of William and Allan from Arioland, he discovered much partiality for the horses which had borne them through the fight at Bothwell Brig. He put them in a paddock by themselves. He would not allow them to be ridden, worked, or sold; and was scarce satisfied a day, while he lived, without going out with cake, or biscuits, or apples in his pocket, and having a friendly converse with the war horses.

Such was the forbidden life which William Hay and his faithful Allan had been leading for some years at the date of our nar-

rative; and which had impelled Allan, with no less courage than inventive talent, to assume, for purposes of intelligence and communication, self-defence, and warning and rescue of friends, the fool's disguise, in which we first made his acquaintance. His proper name was John Allan. "Peerie," was an adnoun not unfrequently given to simple-minded wanderers in Galloway.

CHAPTER XVII.

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worship'd stocks and stones,
Forget not; in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks.

Milton.

HAY had already, before they entered the cavern together, well considered the heavy tidings of which Allan was the bearer. The situation of his mother above all weighed upon his heart, and yet he kept away from what was maddening his brain as one shrinks

from an intolerable horror. His first inquiries were concerning Clavers, the forces he had to rely upon, his movements, and the number of dragoons he had about his person.

"Where is he to-night?" he asked.

"At Machremore Castle," replied Allan; "most of the dragoons billeted about Monygove."

"My opinion is," said Hay, "that he is on his way to Newton. He is playing with Kenmure as a cat plays with a mouse, and I fear with the same success. My powerful kinsman, who a month ago could have had five hundred armed men under his castle walls, has become like a reed shaken by the wind. Earlston disgusted at his indecision has left the country, and Strachan has stepped into his shoes. The hardy retainers, who looked to Kenmure Castle as their strength, and never doubted that the old

banner of freedom and defiance to its enemies would wave over its highest turret, are wandering about in desolate groups, and will be torn by the wolves like sheep without a shepherd. What heard ye of the Merse militia who have entered the Stewartry from the East?"

"They are as far as the Cree," said Allan. "A party of them, with the Earl of Home at their head, were at the opening of the Commission."

"So near," said Hay, musing in half soliloquy. "No, no; they must bind Kenmure to their belts and sweep out Glenken before they send their raw militia up the Cree. As for the dragoons, we can go where they cannot follow."

Allan told what he had overhead Clavers saying to Sir Godfrey M'Culloch. "You have judged rightly," said Allan. "My sovereign lord will be at Newton

to-morrow night or night following at latest."

This Newton being a royal burgh—the modern New Galloway—the charter of which had, by a curious freak of royal favour, been granted fifty years before by Charles I. to the first Viscount Kenmure on the edge of the demesnes of the castle, where not a single dwelling existed at the time, but which could now boast of an hostelry, a town-house, and a few habitations, of some convenience to the inmates of the Castle, and the company from without that had business there. It also gave Kenmure's commissioner a seat in the Scots' Parliament.

"When his sovereign Lordship," continued Allan, "has Kenmure, of which he professes to be full sure, he will have none else to fear than your Highness and your humble servant, Peerie."

"I need not ask if Peerie be as great a favourite at Court as ever," said Hay, passing into the humour of his squire. "To whom could your sovereign lord better confide his secrets?" And still unwilling to approach the subject beating violently at his heart, glided into another topic, hovering on the margin of the other. "The affair at Enterkin will make them more careful how they carry about their prisoners. But how singular that the one we knew best, Paterson of Penninghame—the parish where we now happen to be—was the only one not rescued. Wounded in the scuffle, he was recaptured. Was there anything about Enterkin at the Court?"

Allan mentioned the *naïve* evidence of Henderson that he knew not whether the prisoners were rescued or not, but would be glad to be rescued now himself, and, had he been there, would have done the same.

"Our party lost a letter of his," said Hay.

"It was produced," rejoined Allan, "and he confessed being the writer of it, but they could make nothing of it beyond the suspicion it threw round himself. Poor Henderson is now in need of rescue indeed."

And Allan, having thus entered on the subject of the Commission, proceeded to give an account of what had transpired—the number of prisoners disposed of, the submission of Sir Andrew Agnew, Garthland, and the two sons of Craichlaw, saying so far nothing of the old Lady of Arioland.

"But my mother," interrupted Hay. "You say nothing of the one who is dearest to me. Tell me all—tell me all, though it should crush me into the dust of dust."

With downcast face and in broken accents, Allan told the story which he would fain have left blank, every sentence of which

came with anguish from his own heart, while under every sentence Hay was writhing with passion.

"No more Allan, no more," he cried suddenly, springing to his feet from the heather couch on which they were reclining, their shoulders resting against the rocky wall of the cave. "The air of this hole is stifling. Let us go out under the open sky."

A cold wind was rustling the bushes and shaking the leaves from the trees in the surrounding darkness; but the stars shone clearly and steadily, high in the heavens—not in those twinkling myriads and dense clusters which give to the upper firmament some of the white and pinky radiance of day—but apart, fixed, motionless, yet intensely bright, like eyes of fire staring out of the dark void of night, to which they gave illimitable depth, and yet drew it into form and substance, smooth and solid as a marble

pavement, on which those diamond brilliancies were indented as for ever.

"There, indeed, are stability and repose!" said Hay, as he looked up to heaven. "But the stability and repose of power divine, of work done and perfected. How unlike my poor flickering spirit, beating its feeble wings against an iron cage from which it cannot escape—dejected, chafed, beaten down, and crushed under ever-increasing loads of sacred obligation which it cannot fulfil—resolving vastly and yet performing nothing. This inaction is worse than purgatory. It is the feebleness of my arm that oppresses me—that I feel destroying by inches my very soul!"

"Hush! my dear friend," said Allan, "be calm. The starry lift to which you have appealed may have its heaven-sent lesson to us poor creatures here below—a lesson of constancy, and of trust in an Almighty

Providence, under troubles. As long as the stars shine there is light. As long as life is there is hope."

"My dear, brave unconquerable mother!" continued Hay, scarcely conscious of the counsel tendered him, as he gave way to a paroxysm of mingled rage and grief, resting his head on Allan's shoulder, and quivering through every limb. "To be banished—sold as a slave—toiled and flogged on an Indian plantation. And for what, for whom? For me—for her love to me! Merciful Heaven! Is it to be that I did nothing while this shame of shames, this fiendish vengeance, sparing neither sex nor age, was being done in open day? Am I to lurk in caves or wander on the earth to the end of worthless days with worse than the brand of Cain on my forehead, nay, burned into my inmost heart—a base and conscience-seared matricide?"

Revolting at the picture he had thus drawn of himself, Hay started from Allan's shoulder, and drawing his sword, bent down on his knee, the blade uplifted. "I take God to witness before these orbs of His," he said with a firm and solid voice, "that I shall confront this arch-villain to the face though guarded by a thousand dragoons. When the unworthy son has fallen in a sacred duty, spare, O Heaven! spare the aged and sainted mother."

Allan, who had bowed in awe behind Hay during this invocation, was suddenly raised by the grasp of his companion. "Tell me Allan," cried Hay, in rapid and eager tones, "tell me where and when I shall meet Clavers with sword in hand, on foot or on horseback—put my body against his body, though it were only for an instant —and let Heaven be the arbiter of this long dispute."

"Mr. Hay," said Allan, "I feared the breaking of these woful tidings to your ear, nor can I say that I am surprised at your passion. I, who have played the fool to make a fool of Clavers, with my life in my hand at every step, would as lithe have a bout with him either at broadsword or rapier, and let the better man stand or fall, as the will of God might be. But it's nae easy wark to get within sword's length o' Clavers. He is nane of your cavaliers to be called out in single combat, and as for charging him through his dragoons it would be only a rushing to destruction, which we are nowhere commanded in worldly prudence or in Holy Writ to do. Your body would be riddled with fifty pistol balls before you got within fifty paces of the man you would encounter. But I agree with you so far that we are noo in the last extremity. Yet it should be a' weel considered."

"It is your counsel I wish to hear, Allan," said Hay, "and, after hearing it, I will give you mine."

"Come then, under cover," replied Allan; and the two returned to the cavern, burdened with as weighty and immediately active concerns as ever engaged two human beings. One of those urgent yet tangled skeins of action, in which the cleverest device is fraught only with imminent danger, and a pull this way or that, at the wrong or right time, may harden or loosen the knot; where, in short, there is little left but despair of any action whatever.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 042049590